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Creating a Sense of Belonging as a Transnational Family: A Qualitative Study of Student Visa-Holding Families in the United States

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Creating a Sense of Belonging as a Transnational Family:
A Qualitative Study of Student Visa-Holding Families in the United States

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Abstract

Having a *sense of belonging* is a fundamental human need. In the age of mass globalization, students attending universities far away from their home countries, together with immediate family members, function as transnational entities as they engage in day-to-day activities. These *student visa-holding families* are a unique subset of all transnational families. They live under distinct timelines, have access to a unique set of opportunities, and face peculiar challenges. How these factors affect a family's sense of belonging has been understudied—especially for families originating from South Asia. The United States holds a comparatively large share of the world's families of this type. The challenge of establishing a sense of belonging, especially in the context of shifting political winds, can be a source of family stress. In this paper, I investigated how student visa-holding families function to create a sense of belonging using qualitative methods, with a phenomenological approach. Six themes emerged: 1) family support, 2) meaningful opportunities, 3) supportive community, 4) familiarity, 5) positive attitude, and 6) supportive policies. Supportive policies act as a unique theme because it has the ability to enhance the other five ways families created a sense of belonging.

Keywords: college student families, phenomenology, sense of belonging, South Asia, transnational families, visa policy.

Introduction

Globalization processes are creating changes in family life which call for new avenues of study and new lenses capable of studying the changing nature of families affected by globalization (Giddens, 2002). This certainly includes transnational families (Kim, 2009). Although transnational families are not new forms of families, they are becoming increasingly more common (Baldassar & Merla, 2014). Transnational families can be defined as families who live within multiple nations and have traveled across international borders (Reynolds, Goulbourne, Solomos, & Zontini, 2010). Past research on transnational families has identified *identity dilemma* as one of the stresses which they may experience as families move away from their geographic origins (Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, & Collier, 1992; Reynolds et al., 2010). Identity dilemma, it is theorized, can be exacerbated or ameliorated by national and international policies, at home and abroad. Policies and political rhetoric, it is believed, may impact the manner in which families set about to create and change their identity. Currently, however, this remains an understudied area of family research. That is, it largely is a mystery, how a family's migration status changes and creates new family identities (Mazzucato & Schans, 2011) and how stakeholders in these process set about to fill the *need to belong* in the host country.

Despite the fact that there are an estimated 4.3 million international students in the world (Martin & Rizvi, 2014), there have been almost no studies in the discipline of human development and family studies regarding these transnational families. Student visa holders are categorized as short-term residents of the US by the federal government (Monger & Barr, 2010). As short-term residents, student visa-holding families live their everyday lives in the US as they complete their studies. Similar to other student families, they may have experiences

such as paying rent, paying taxes, opening bank accounts, buying vehicles, studying, working, and maintaining family wellbeing, alongside other residents. But, whether and how student visa-holding families come to feel they belong in their communities in US is an important factor, and is the focus of this study.

Specifically, this paper focuses on student visa-holding families and their ways of creating a sense of belonging as they start to live in new nation. The *sense of belonging hypothesis* suggests that need to belong is fundamental to all humans, and that the lack of a sense of belonging is a significant source of stress (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). I explore the usefulness of this theory as it may apply to a family's need to gain a sense of belonging to a community in a host country while at least one family member is pursuing a graduate and/or undergraduate education. In addition, this paper focuses on the role that related policies may play when student visa-holding families are creating a sense of belonging. I have utilized the phenomenology approach because I wish to understand the experience of creating a sense of belonging within these families from South Asian.

Review of Literature

Sense of Belonging

The need to belong is a fundamental human need, which is vital for positive mental health (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). According to the belonging hypothesis, people need meaningful relationships and opportunities to emotionally connect within their community (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Having access to family and friend relationships and opportunities to connect is important in the theory of belonging. Researchers have identified that a sense of belonging is an important challenge faced by transnational families (Hagerty et al., 1992), especially as they are cast into unfamiliar places. A sense of belonging is an important aspect of

identity development and change. Holding an identity as one who is disconnected from community will likely be a stress for people who are unsure of where they belong (Baldassar, & Merla, 2013; Bauman, 1996; Reynolds et al., 2010).

Moreover, belonging depends on how people view themselves in relation to others in the society (Amit & Bar-Lev, 2015; Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Local communities and local ways play an important role in how newcomers, such as international families, develop an emotional connection to the location. Among Muslim immigrant families in the Netherlands, for example, locality was identified as one critically important factor for developing a sense of belonging (Ennaji, 2016). Locality is an issue for that can affect families impacted by transnationalism and globalization. Newcomers such as student visa-holding transnational families living in the US, would likely view themselves comparative to native local families. Observations of local families, having larger numbers of family members living nearby, offering support in everyday life tasks such as doing activities together and spending weekends together can draw attention to disparities for the student visa-holding family that lacks similar social support. Nevertheless, as student visa-holding families become further integrated into communities, developing new social ties, growing similarity, and integration into social networks may help them to feel more settled and develop belonging.

Belonging has been explained through several different theoretical perspectives. Bowlby (1973) suggested that attachments are developed through creating and maintaining relationships. Attachment to people is essential to feel belonging. Belonging to a certain group is essential for humans. In fact, during the human evolutionary processes, small groups acted as the basic survival unit for humans (Barchas, 1986). During difficult times, individuals heavily relied on close family members and friends, which give them a level of comfort and confidence to face

challenges in life. Thus, studies testing the need to belong hypothesis have found that frequent and pleasant interaction with at least a few people is essential to developing a sense of belonging. To be truly effective, these interactions also must happen in a temporarily stable framework (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). The varied types of social communities surrounding individuals and families can be good sources for meaningful and stable relationships that are essential for establishing a sense of belonging. In this study, the focus is on student visa-holding transnational families who live in the US. Thus, their immediate communities may arise from school, work places, student organizations, and other international and transnational family groups. Moreover, in order to develop a sense of belonging, adequate sustained opportunities for interactions among community members need to be available (Baumeister & Leary).

Student Visa-holding, Transnational Families

Traditionally, family is viewed as an entity that lives together in one location, typically within one national border (Edgar, 2004; Mazzucato & Schans, 2011). Families living across multiple borders have often been difficult to study and thus are seldom the focus of family science (Mazzucato, & Schans; Baldassar, & Baldock, 2000). Currently, the US is one of the countries with relatively high transnational populations, and this may be especially so within systems of higher education. Much of the past transnational family research has been focused on immigrant families. However, there are different kinds of transnational families. Among them, student visa-holding families are an understudied family population (Chen, 2009). Student visa-holding families in US are a type of transnational family who are holding visas so they may engage in educational development activities for a limited amount of time (US Customs and Border Protection, 2018). In 2017, there were 421,008 student visa admission were issued in the United States (U.S. Department of State-Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2017). This includes

27,435 spouses and children visa (F2 student visa) as well (U.S. Department of State- Bureau of Consular Affairs, 2017).

Information about the demographic characteristics of transnational families in the US is difficult to find, but statistics from studies in other developed countries offer some related clues. According to some Australian statistics, most student visa-holding families include students between the ages of 20-30 (Martin & Rizvi, 2014). The majority of student visa-holding individuals were participating in undergraduate programs. In addition, there are graduate-level international students, who were often partnered or married, or become so during their tenure as graduate students. Often, student visa-holding families are young families, some may have only recently launched a new family and are living together in the host country. Many are highly educated and well skilled, or rapidly becoming so (Chen, 2009). Even though student visas are impermanent, the period of time living in the host country can often extend five years or more, depending on the programs in which they are enrolled. Three to five years, or more, in the early years of a developing family can be a crucial developmental period for later life family wellbeing.

Student Visa Policies

Transnational families are products of globalization. Family functioning, however, is not commonly the focus of examination in political studies on the subject of globalization (Edgar, 2004; Trask, 2011). Political trends and public policies, however, have direct and indirect effects on student visa-holding transnational families, and so there is a need for an interdisciplinary bridge between these subjects.

There are very few macro-level policies that supports student visa holding families to feel secure and develop a true sense of belonging to the host country (Gopal, 2016). A

comparative study on student visa policy among US, UK, Canada and Australia found that US and UK have the strictest student visa policy (Gopal, 2016). Student visa holders typically must follow strict rules as they live in United States (US Citizenship and Immigration Services, 2018; Chen, 2009; US Customs Border Protection, n.d.). These strict rules applies to the, amount of hours they work, where they can work, who can visit them here in US, how long visitors can visit them, when student visa holding families can travel back to their home countries, school performances, what educational opportunities they can apply to, etc.

By virtue of their political status, student visa-holding family lives are highly regulated through national visa policies. Many of the things these families are and are not permitted to do is determined by their visa status. A levels of government as well as educational institutions have created an enacted laws and policies which regulate the daily lives of student visa-holding families. There are components of visa policies that impair or support the ways student visa-holding families seek to create a sense of belonging. Thus, it is important to understand the impact of visa policies on the ways student visa-holding families develop a sense of belonging.

Participating in a college degree program means being in a highly visible position, with institutional oversight and high stakes whenever there is a risk of violating visa rules. Opportunities to fade away into labor black markets, settle exclusively into ethnic subcultures, or drift among various geographical locations is usually impossible or untenable. In short, international students in higher education nearly always face being *out* of their homelands and familiar cultural groups. Thus, in many ways, they may be more exposed to the opportunities and challenges provided by the host society as well as national and international politics, as compared with other types of temporary residents from outside countries (Kim, 2009). For example, student visa policy include restrictions such as they can only be employed on campus

unless students qualify for Curricular Practical Training (CPT) or Optional Practical Training (OPT) after graduation (Iowa State University, n.d). Furthermore, even though OPT is available for student visa holders to work after the completion of their degrees, this work permit is only applicable from one to three years depending on the field of study. According to the department of homeland security, if a student visa holder is in STEM field they are eligible for additional two years of OPT while non-STEM student visa holders are only eligible for one year of OPT (US Citizen and Immigration Services, 2019). Often employees are hesitant to hire students with OPT permit due the time restriction. Thus, being a student visa holder on OPT bring its own sets of challenges as they try to merge to the workforce outside of campus.

Student visa holders can bring their dependent family members under dependent student visas (Travel State Government, n.d). Usually the dependents of student visa holders that are eligible to receive these visas are spouses and children (Dartmouth, n.d.). As a dependent visa holder, one cannot engage in most kinds of employment in the US. However, spouse (dependent) visa holders may engage in part-time study in Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVP) certified school. Similarly, children of the student visa holding families may attend elementary and secondary school in the US (Dartmouth, n.d.). These are simply examples of a few policies that influence the lives of student visa-holding families in US.

In some respects, student visa-holding families are forgotten families. They may receive fewer supports from their home countries because they live in different country. At the same time, their host country may be hesitant to support them as they are not regular citizens and are often barred from the political processes of the host country. Thus, family wellbeing lacks priority in both contexts, as reflected in policies and interventions. These institutional forces can

further jeopardize the sense of belonging in addition to creating real material deficits, posing greater challenges for transnational families.

Current Study

Regardless of these challenges, as families and humans this particular population need to hold on their fundamental human need, sense of belonging. Thus, I used a phenomenology approach to understand the experiences of student visa-holding families in terms of creating a sense of belonging as they live in the US. In order to understand the visa policy role in helping families to create a sense of belonging, I incorporated the role of policy as part of my analysis. This study can be approached through a different viewpoint which differs from earlier studies on student visa-holding families related to a sense of belonging because of the researcher positionality as a south Asian student visa-holding family member myself.

The research questions in this study are:

- How do student visa-holding families create a sense of belonging as they live in the United States?
- What is the role of student visa policies in creating a sense of belonging?

Participants

Table 1 provides the participant selection criterion that I used for my study.

Table 1: Participant Selection Criteria

-
1. Participants should be from any of the following South Asian countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, India, Pakistan or Sri Lanka)
 2. All the participants and their immediate family (at least one) should be living in the US. They should hold a type of student visa as well. I define immediate family as the spouse and children.
 3. The participant should be 18 years or older.
 4. The participant must have lived in US for at least more than a year.
 5. Participants should be able to directly communicate with me in English.
-

Potential participants were identified through a snowball sampling method. I reached out to participants who I thought would qualify for my study. In addition, I asked participants to help me to find others to participate. Participants had the opportunity to contact me if they were interested in participating my study. I enrolled as many as I could locate until I reached saturation of my data and/or encountered limitations regarding time and resources. These are common practices in qualitative interviewing as judged by research publications. This study interviewed seven total participants. Participants' ages range from 28-32 and there were three female and four male participants. All of the participants had a bachelor's degree or higher level of education. Two participants were homemakers at the time of the interview. The other five participants were enrolled in a degree program in the university and were student employees of the university. In most of the cases, I was able to interview both spouses of a family as separate individual interviews.

Procedure

In-depth interviews were conducted to gather data. I conducted seven interviews within two weeks. I met with each of the participants in their houses. Interview time ranged from forty-five minutes to one hour and ten minutes. During the interview, open-ended questions were asked with the help of supporting questions. The interview questions are listed in Table 2 below.

After identifying the potential participants through snowball sampling, I reached out to them via email or in-person with the invitation document where I asked them to participate in my study. In this email, I mentioned why they were chosen as participants for this study and included the selection criteria. Participants had time to decide if they wanted to participate in the study. Later, they reached out to me with their acceptance and then I asked the participants to schedule a meeting with me at their convenience. Before conducting the interview, informed

consent with participants' signature was collected. I informed the participants that meetings were preferred to be in-person and that I was happy to meet in a location that was convenient and comfortable, such as their homes, offices or public conference room. All the interviews were done in-person.

Interviews were recorded using a mobile recorder. Soon after each interview concluded, the audio recording was uploaded into a password-secured university computer account. Later, recordings were uploaded to an account at www.rev.com, a support company that transcribed the recording. In addition, I took notes during the interview. The transcriptions were used for the data analysis.

The interview questions were developed to inquire about participants' experiences as a visa-holding family in the US. I asked questions particularly related to the creation of *a sense of belonging* (see Table 2). In addition, I used context-specific follow up questions during the interview. All the participants were proficient in English and the interviews were conducted in this language. Moreover, participants were given a survey to gather some limited demographic data.

Method

In this study, I employed an inductive coding method for data analysis. First, I read the data multiple times and tried to understand the data in terms of the research question of the study. Next, I arranged the data into a coding table. I engaged in three levels of coding. In the first level, I read each line of the data and identified segments of the data that spoke to the idea of sense of belonging and interrelated concepts (Thomas, 2003). Then, I labeled these segments with words, based on my first impression on the data. Often the words I used for labeling were taken directly from the data. In addition, at this stage, I redacted any identifying information,

which was embedded in the transcripts and introduced pseudonyms into the transcripts. In the second level of coding, I refined overlapping labels to be more concise and gathered the labels to meaningful categories (Thomas, 2003). Saldana (2013) refers to this process as *coding for patterns*. This process revealed similarities in both the data and the labels that were created during first-level coding. In the final coding, similar labels were combined to make themes. These final codes were the themes that emerge within my data. In order to assess whether there was undue bias in this subjective coding process, I sought for input from another analyst. To address authenticity of the findings, I sent them to a study participant. This participant agreed that the findings do speak the ways in which she finds a sense of belonging while in the US

Table 2. Interview Schedule

Primary Interview Questions	Supporting Questions
How was your experience as you moved to the US at the beginning?	How was your experience around leaving your country? Who is at living at your country?
How did you and your family create a sense of belonging in terms of family and other relationships?	Who is living here with you? Do you miss your family back in your home country? When is it most difficult and you feel that you miss your family? Tell me about those moments that you feel you are missing your extended family? How do you overcome those challenges as you live here in US? How often you get to go see your family back in your home country?
How did you create a sense of belonging at your work place?	How was when you first start to work here? Where there any challenges? How did you overcome those challenges?
How did you and your family create a sense of belonging among friends?	Do you have many friends? Who are they? How did you meet them? How did you develop those relationships and friendships? What do you do with friends? In case of emergency, do you have a group friend that you can relay and trust? Tell me about a moment where it was difficult build friendship or relationship since you moved to US?

How do national and international laws shape your family experience?	<p>Are there any international laws that you are aware of impact your everyday life? (For example, the visa that you on)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does that influence your everyday life? • Do you feel that it is influencing you? If so, tell me about a moment where you felt that?
Tell me about your experience of how you plan your future?	<p>What kind of plans do you have for your future?</p> <p>Where do you want to live and grow with your family?</p> <p>Do you have any challenges on your way that hinder you to achieve those future goals because you are living in US?</p> <p>Or do you think it is easier for you to achieve these goals because you are living in US?</p>
What challenges do you see when you think about planning your <u>family future</u> ?	<p>When you think as member of a transnational family (your family is scattered around world) what kind of challenges you see in future?</p> <p>Are there ways you think you can overcome those that you mentioned?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What kind of strategies you will use? • How are you going to handle them?
How does your family create support systems around you to deal with the challenges they face?	<p>Do you have supportive people around you?</p> <p>Can you tell me an incident where you received the support you needed when you were in a challenging situation as you lived in US?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who came to support you? How did they support? • Do you think systems in US (work place, education, health care) are supportive to your everyday life? <p>What are the moment you can think of you thought systems can be supportive towards your everyday life?</p>
What kind of support systems are there to help your family?	
Overall how do you <u>make meaning</u> as you live in US with your family	<p>Tell me about a meaningful moment you experience after you moved to US?</p> <p>Tell me about a moment (if there is) you felt that there is lack of meaning in your life after you moved to US?</p> <p>Over all what is helping you to have the meaning in your life?</p>

Researcher Positionality

I am a master's student in the Department of Human Development and Family Studies (HDFS) at Iowa State University. I am from Sri Lanka and I live in US with my husband. As you see, I am a transnational family member myself. I have experienced life in US as an individual student and a newly married family member. The experiences are quite different

when you live in the US as an unmarried and married person. I think as a married transnational family member, life becomes more challenging because now you have to think for your spouse, children and parents back at home. I believe, my position as a student visa-holding family member might have influenced on this research. In order to reduce my subjectivity on the research output, I did a member check on my data analysis and results. This helped me to reduce and identify any subjective decisions that I have taken within my project. I also have keen interest on international policies that affect transnational families; I have chosen this particular research due to the intersection of these two interests.

Results

The data supported six different themes. They are family support, meaningful opportunities, supportive community, familiarity, positive attitude, and supportive policies. These themes represented the ways student visa-holding families created a sense of belonging as they spent their day-to-day lives in the US.

Family Support

Participants often referred to the importance of family support as they adjusted to their lives in the US. Participants valued family presence and everyday interaction with family members. All the participants in the study had their spouses living with them in the US. Likewise, they each had much to say about the spouse's role in their lives. For example, Dasun's wife is a homemaker and he mentioned that:

“Yeah. Basically, my wife is helping me very much to come to this portion in both those, in family life as well as academic. At this moment, I was more focused on the academic part, and my wife is more like she's responsible all the household things. She is managing everything, and she's not giving me any responsibility of these kinds of things because then I can more focused on my things. She's helping me very much in all

the things and preparing me all the meals and everything, and getting ready for me to all the things that I need.” (Dasun, age 29)

Dasun’s wife’s presence and her support helped him to focus more on the education and work that he did in the university. He mentioned that as his wife took responsibility for house-related activities, he could fully focus on his work. Similarly, Kalu (age 32), mentioned that only after his wife joined him in the US, his life became more organized. “After she came here everything is kind of ... I think I am ... we are more organized. I’m used to be very disorganized”. This shows that family support helps these families to feel grounded. Kalu’s disorganized life became more organized as he started to live as a family in the US. Shali mentioned that her husband made her life transition to the US very easy. Shali’s husband had lived in the US before she married and joined him in the US. Thus, he was familiar with life here, and that helped her because she was able to talk and share anything with her husband.

“Outside of education, I think it wasn’t very difficult for me because I’m living with my husband. I can openly talk about anything and I can share everything with my husband. He supports me, so beside education, it’s not difficult to me... my husband, help me in everything, like learning, driving, grocery, laundry things, everything. Yeah, from basic homework to other grocery works. My husband helped me.” (Shali, age not shared)

In a way, spouses in student visa-holding families are interdependent on each other because often spouse is the only close family member living with them here in the US. Thus, they shared daily tasks such as doing groceries, cooking, and laundry to show their support for each other.

Kalani mentioned that her biggest support is her husband:

“If you talk about family members, only my best- The biggest support is my husband. But then when I’m feeling down, he’s always there. He’s just always there saying, “I’ve been through more than this, so I can understand you.” And he tried to explain me how people are, and how people react to different situation. How should I react. Like he calms me down.” (Kalani, age not shared)

Just as Shali, Kalani’s husband had lived in the US before she joined him after their marriage. She mentioned that her husband would wait for her night class to finish which was at

a different location from the university. Thus, she valued the guidance and advice her husband was able to provide her whenever she needed.

Foreign student visa-holding families valued the support they received from their family members living in their home countries. Samadi, a homemaker mentioned that she felt lonely or bored because she could not be employed during the daytime when her husband went to the university. She liked to pass her time talking to her family back in her home country both during the day and at night.

“Because of my visa, I cannot work here. It's illegal. Even though I love to work and earn some money, because of that problem, I cannot work here. Even my husband cannot do part-time. It's the rule, US. It's kind of sad. I talk with my parents and my husband parents, and I clean my house. In the morning, I cook foods and make lunch box for my husband and preparing him to go to the campus, and then I try to call my parents and my husband parents.” (Samadi, age 29)

Even though her family lived overseas, the ability to connect to family back home via online communication methods helped her to pass her day in as meaningful a way as possible. Similarly, Kalani mentioned that at times when she did not know what she was doing, especially during festival times, she would call her mother to get directions and guidance. She said, “During our festival time, there's something different we cook. There is something different we make. And I had never stepped inside the kitchen before. So, I would call my mom and just asked her, ‘What am I supposed to do, and how am I supposed to do?’” Thus, it was important for these families to stay connected to their families back home, because they acted as an important support system.

Moreover, another participant spoke about his appreciation of the ability that his family member living in the home country could visit them in the US. Student visa holders often had demanding and busy schedules. Often they found it difficult to find adequate time for flying back to their home countries to visit and spend time with their families. However, as an

alternative, they valued when their family members were able to visit them in the US. Manjil, spoke about this:

“For my mother and my mother-in-law, and have them come over for extended period of time, just for example six months or more, was really comforting, that there is such option if parents want to come and see our life in here.” (Manjil, age 28)

This statement shows that student visa-holding families valued the support they received from their family members, both those that were living with them in the US and those living in the home country. Their support and presence made their lives more comfortable in the US.

Meaningful Opportunities

Student visa-holding families valued the educational and career development opportunities. All of the participants came to the US for educational opportunities. Thus, it is not surprising that opportunities bring meaning to their lives. Raja talked about the opportunity to come to the US to pursue his graduate education with a great deal of pride.

“I must not boast, but I was I think I was the first among my cousins. I was the first among my cousins who came to the United States. A few of my cousins had a very good higher education, but they all were back in our own country.” (Raja, age 32)

Similarly, Kalu mentioned that, in the university, graduate-level education can be challenging at times but he is happy with the opportunity he had to be a part of a prestigious university. He used the word *happy* to describe his positive feelings towards university education.

“Sometimes there is like things doesn't work and it makes me a little bit off center or stressed. So, sometimes it's challenging but if you think in a big picture what I am learning or what kind of benefits I'm getting, it makes us happy.” (Kalu, age 32)

In addition, participants talked about being a part of cutting-edge research, having scholarships, travelling internationally, and contributing to the development of a scientific field as meaningful opportunities. Also, opportunities for their spouses were mentioned in a positive

regard. They mentioned that spouses being able to work on campus, and getting a good education were great opportunities for their families.

Manjil, mentioned that after his undergraduate education, he had the ability to join employment opportunities, which was beneficial for his individual career development. He mentioned that he felt privileged to have such opportunities on his path and valued them more highly than other opportunities that were not as much aligned towards his career goals. Thus, as the years passed by during his stay in the US, he was able to have more meaningful opportunities. This shows that not just any opportunities, but meaningful opportunities for personal and career growth brings a sense of meaning and belonging to these individuals.

“In some sense, I felt more privileged as teacher. I had more interaction with the diverse population of the university. Whereas in my maintenance job, I was not exposed. This gave me more interaction with the university students, which increased my communication skills, and helped me ... more sense of some connection to the country itself because young people of the country is listening to what you have to say, so you feel more appreciated than doing a cleaning job.” (Manjil, age 28)

Two participants spoke about their experiences about opportunities to give back to their home community. Raja mentioned that he had opportunities to be part of charity programs. Similarly, Manjil mentioned that the opportunity to provide service to his home country was a meaningful event that it was something he was a part of while he has been living in the US. He had applied and recieved a service grant where he was able to conduct a special project in his home country. He shared his feeling about this.

“living in this privileged country, I could go back to my home country and help through a project where we went and helped develop rural [part of his country]. That felt really nice that I had that opportunity to give back to my country.” (Manjil, age 28)

On the other hand, when their ability to give back was restricted, it made them feel unhappy. Samadi and Dasun mentioned that not being present in their home countries to take care of the family is stressful. This shows that as much as these families value the opportunities

they had for themselves to expand their careers, and family lives, they felt satisfied when they could give back to the communities in the host country and their home country. Often visa-holding families are viewed through family policy lenses as a group who needs support; but they are also active members of the society who have found ways to contribute to the greater good.

Supportive Community

Student visa-holding families were very creative and open to building their community around them. They value every community interaction they encounter. As they were student families, their educational institutions played an important role in their sense of community. University student organizations, support groups, teachers, and friends were vital for these families. All the participants spoke about the importance of the university's role in their community. For example, several participants mentioned that going out to eat at restaurants for meals with their research and cohort members played an important role in their day-to-day life.

“Our department has a ... I'll say they have a good structure. So, all cohort, has to take almost the same course in their fall semester. And we used to have a same office. We have a TA office. So, we used to spend most ... lots of time together. Same office, same class. And with the difficulty level of the homework ... they are very difficult, I mean. And we are forced to sit together and solve in a group. And that's how we kind of get together. And we used to go out for lunch together. We used to solve the homework and used to see around ... everything almost. And this is how I became closer with my friends.” (Kalu, age 32)

For some, the university brought the local community closer to them. Manjil and Raja shared their experience on how university staff and teachers connected them to local happenings and people. Raja shared, during the first days on campus, he had to take an English class, which was designed for international students. As he liked to do martial arts, the teacher in the English class introduced him to a local Tai Chi master. Later he got enrolled in the Tai Chi class and it allowed him to continue one of his childhood passions. Similarly, during his undergraduate

years, Manjil learned much about living in the US, through a long-lasting relationship with one of the university staff members. He mentioned that locals connected to the university helped them to feel connected to the community and lifestyle of the US.

“Those were locals who were connected to the university. For example, we've had a security guard member in security, and he invited us, me and my girlfriend, to his house. He had his mother was very nice to us. I learned a lot about cooking and different shopping materials, and just about the lifestyle. Also, host families hosted us for sometimes for even a month so we could see the different lifestyle and get used to living in foreign country.” (Manjil, age 28)

All of the participants in the study spoke about the support and importance of their country community living in the US. Their involvement in their country community helped them to celebrate their cultural festivals, have dinner parties, and life events. In addition, for most of the participants, when they first came to the US, it was the home country community members who had helped them to find their apartments, picked them from the airport, took them shopping, and ran other errands. Finally, for some participants, their country community brought the biggest sense of belonging. Especially for Shali, she felt that the her country community is the closest support system that her family had, because she felt that she can easily reach out to them.

“They are just my educational purpose, but for other friends, friends from my own [native country] community are closer to me. Yeah, because they are also the neighboring... They also live nearby, so yeah. We meet for some occasions, just to celebrate our festivals like that.” (Shali, age not shared)

Furthermore, the areas they lived in contributed largely to one's sense of belonging in the community. Some mentioned that the areas they lived in made them feel comfortable. For example, local events such as farmer's markets helped them to feel that they belong to the community because they could share common time with local families. Further, Samadi and Dasun mentioned having everything that they needed around them within a reachable distance

which made their lives more comfortable. It was the simple things about the area, such as easy-to-access bus systems, that helped these families feel they belonged to a community.

Finally, for all of my participants, the university became a bridge to the US local community. Through the university, these families built their communities in creative ways. Their cohorts, teachers, research groups, and even regular staff helps them to feel part of a community. Most importantly, their home country community plays an important role when building a supportive community that they need.

Familiarity

Student visa-holding families felt more at home in the US when they were familiar with the way of life in the US. Their experiences, access to familiar people and attempts to gain familiarity about living in the US helped them to feel comfortable. For example, two of the participants mentioned because they had lived aboard before coming to the US it helped them to adjust faster. When they can adjust faster, they feel that they belonged in the host country. Kalu and Manjil both had lived aboard. Kalu expressed his first days in the US as “For me it was not very difficult because from my high school I have been living away from my family.”, Similarly, Manijl shared, “So I had already experienced living outside of my country. So, it was a very natural transition for me.” Thus, this shows that prior experience of living abroad helped their transition to the US; this made it easier to develop a sense of belonging.

Additionally, familiarity of the language made their transition easy. Raja, mentioned, “Language was not a problem because I knew English. So, when I first came to the United States the language helped me a lot.” Not having to worry about language in a new country helped a lot. It helped to connect to people and understand systems of the new country better,

which eventually helped families to feel belonged faster. At the same time for those who were not familiar with the language, their adjustment was more challenging.

“The language is different. It is definitely different, English. At the beginning, sometime it's hard to understand what they are saying, I think, because the accent is different, because ... Oh, yeah, so language is different.” (Samadi, age 29)

According to Samadi, even though she knew how to read, write and spell in English, the accent was challenging. Similarly, Kalani mentioned that her classmates had a hard time understanding what she was saying, because of the accent. These moments made them feel uncomfortable.

Moreover, Dasun shared that he and his wife took steps to develop familiarity even before coming to the US. They had contacted people they knew who were living in the US and university officials to get helpful information. Like Dasun, other participants talked about how they reached out to common friends to get information of things such as living costs, finding apartments, climate, airport picks up, accommodation and others because they knew having at least a little bit of familiarity of the new country and place will be helpful for them to feel comfortable.

“Also, there are some [my home country] people here. They helped me to check-in and let me know the status of the apartment that I am going to move in and the other things is... That is one example. The other example is, what will be the cost here? Because we don't have any idea of how much will be going to be the cost of the things, and all the foods, and everything here. We just researched about that as well and about the climate, how the things will be here, and those are the things that we researched.” (Dasun, age 29)

Also, both Shali's and Kalani's husbands had been living in the US for several years before they joined them after their marriages. This made their family life much easier in the US. They both relied on their husbands for information and advice. They trusted their spouse's experiential advice, which gave them a sense of security. For example, when Kalani was having

a hard time adjusting to the education system, her husband's advice helped her to overcome those challenges.

"And then next semester my husband was calling like, "You need to stay more in school. You need to talk to your friends, go to library. You paid for your technology, you have paid your technology fee, you can use computer lab there. You can use libraries and everything. Why do you just come home and do this?" I was like okay, fine, I'll try that." (Kalani, age not shared)

Thus, this theme demonstrates that student visa-holding families felt secured and well-adjusted to life in the US when they had familiarity. They got familiarity through previous experiences, people they already knew, and by seeking information from available resources.

Positive Attitude

A positive attitude helped student visa-holding families to be hopeful and understand their experience through a realistic lens. As student families, they were not fully financially stable, and did not have their extended family close to them. Also, they were still building their careers. Even though they strongly believe that living in the US was a great opportunity, their future was not fully clear because they were not eligible for permanent careers or long-term residence in the US just because they studied in the US (Gopal, 2016). Thus, most of them felt that some aspects of their future were very uncertain; when uncertainty is present, it can be very challenging to develop a sense of belonging. Despite the uncertainty, they felt happy and optimistic about their lives at the moment. Through the acquired data, I was able to conclude that these families held a realistic and positive attitude towards their lives.

Samadi, mentioned that she felt sad sometimes because she was not eligible to work in the US. She mentioned that she had a bachelor's education and she would have liked to earn some money to provide for herself and family development. However, she was not eligible for

that due to the visa policy restrictions. However, she accepted it, she said, “it’s okay”. The acceptance of reality helped her to move-pass the situation.

“The other thing is I cannot work. If I could work, I don't have to stay home and do same thing over and over. I can go out and do some part-time jobs and earn some money. It will help to our family, but it's okay. Now I used to it. It is relaxed day routine, not so much stress.” (Samadi, age 29)

She understood the reality of her current situation. Thus, she had begun to notice the brighter side of things. She said because she does not have to work she can stay home, feel relaxed and not feel stressed. This shows her positive take on the situation.

Moreover, most of the participants accepted that their future could be uncertain. However, they believe that working hard might and can clear that uncertainty. They understand that as a visa-holding family living in the US, there are risks such as not being able to find a career for themselves after university education. They understand and they adapt to these situations. Manjil, believes that working hard is the only way that they can secure their future and career. He said even back in their home countries careers are uncertain as there are fewer job opportunities. In the US, job competition is very high thus; hard work could be the path to certainty. He expressed that “There's only way, is to work hard now and maybe things will get better”. This shows that he wanted to work hard now. Similarly, Raja mentioned that he was sticking to what he had started. He hoped that his dedication and hard work towards his education would give him a better future.

“Basically, because education... I think I'm just doing my hard work. I'm sticking with my education. I think my hard work is... Hard work means like it's sticking with whatever I have decided. I mean...” (Raja, age 32)

Like Raja, all of the participants expressed their trust on US education and career training. Due to this trust, they worked hard and dedicated their energy to complete what they had started in their academic journeys. Families had taken the responsibility of clearing their

future paths despite the challenges. They were hopeful and worked hard because that was one thing that they could do at that moment.

On the other hand some families understood that there was a possibility that they might not get a career opportunity after their university education here in the US. In such a situation, they might have to return back to home countries. Often, they felt the idea of leaving their dreams in the US, as a difficult task.

“In any case, I don't know it will happen or not, but in any case, after my husband complete his PhD, if we cannot find a job, we have to go to our home country. We have to left our dreams here and go to our home country. That is a problem, but I don't think we cannot find job here because if he did his PhD very well, I think he will do it very well.” (Samadi, age 29)

In this situation, Samadi accepted reality as it was, and was not negative about their future. She at the end of the quote said, she believed if her husband did the schooling and research well, they would still have a good chance of continuing their dreams and goals in the US. The hope for their family dreams was always helping these families to move forward.

Therefore, a positive attitude helps families to understand the true nature of their current situation as a student visa-holding family. They have taken steps to adapt to the situation as needed. Families believed that working hard and dedication would secure a successful future for their families in the US. Thus, families have developed a great deal of hope for their future. This hopefulness could have helped them to acquire a sense of belonging in the US.

Supportive Policies

Overall participants spoke about the role of policy in their lives. Some policies that are in place helped student visa-holding families to create a sense of belonging as they lived in the US. Participants spoke about the benefits of the university policies and the support of those in

their lives. Especially, participants shared family-friendly policies. For example, Shali, Kalu and Manjil spoke about the university's financial policies. Especially, Kalu mentioned that these financial policies were helping him to provide for his family. "Financial support system that we are getting from Iowa State University. I'm getting paid and that's how we are running our family." Thus, policies that gave financial security helped student families to function their lives independently in the US. Shali received instate tuition rates because her husband was on a graduate assistantship. Further, Kalu mentioned that university family-friendly housing policies helped international student families to live in affordable and good housing neighborhoods.

Additionally, general inclusive policies helped student visa-holding families feel belonged. These policies might not be directed only towards student visa-holding families but good policies help these families to feel included. Manjil gave an example, "university policies, the freedom for international students to be involved in any organization or take any class head-to-head with any other American or other students gives the equality." Often, within the university, student's family members could join student organizations and attend events. They valued the freedom they get within the university. Thus, university-level policies whether they were financial policies, housing related policies or policies that granted them freedom to join organizations, aided these families.

Moreover, participants expressed that there were components of the student visa policy that benefited them. Manjil, shared a lot about policies that supported his everyday life in the US. He mentioned that the F-1 student visa policy itself let him come to the US to pursue his thirst for research. Also, the component of the visa policy such as Optional Practical Training (OPT) gave him a sense of security for future employment, even though it was temporary.

"The F1 visa policy has always allowed me to come here as student and pursue my education. The F1 visa policy also allows for me to do the CPT, which is curricular

practical training, so I can have some extra internships and have the more rounded experience. It also feels nice to have the option for OPT and it's accessibility up to three years in STEM field. So it kind of gives me some sense of security.” (Manil, age 28)

Policies such as OPT and CPT (curricular practical training) gave student visa-holding families’ access to career opportunities. Knowing that these policies were there to support their career development, families and individuals got some sense of security. Further, Kalu and Manjil spoke about the value of policies that were in place to help them to support their families. Kalu mentioned that it was because of the F-2 visa policy that his wife was able to join him in the US and continue to join ISU as a student.

“So, their policy to promote their spouses too, if husband and wife is in university, their policy to promote their spouse to join the university. So, that's why my wife is able to join ISU” (Kalu, age 32)

Manjil mentioned that he valued other general visa policies such as tourist visa policies. The tourist visa policy enabled his mother and mother-in-law to visit him. Thus, visa policies gave freedom for these families to travel around the globe to visit and spend time with their extended families. Sometimes, policies did not even have to aim towards visa-holding families. General supportive policies and systems that are in place can help student visa-holding families as well. Raja, mentioned that he was able to apply for a program that supported low-income housing with utility bills.

“Yeah. For example, I would say, let's say for low income families, I have been qualified for, this is my third year, I had a heating assistance from MICA. So I got assistance on those heating bills because of the low income policies. So those kind of policies, if it was not there I would have to pay another hundred dollars, or you know? Those things have helped me a lot,” (Raja, age 32)

Even though such programs are not particularly directed towards student visa-holding families, this general policy supported Raja’s family. This suggests that general family-friendly policies and systems were beneficial to all families. Samadi also spoke about helpful systems in

the US. She mentioned that user-friendly systems such as on-line groceries and banking contributed to a chaos-free life in the US. Similarly, Dasun felt that driving in the US was easier compared to his home country. He was able to quickly learn the driving rules and road manners. Thus, as a family, they could travel to places because he enjoyed traveling with his wife when they had free time. Student visa-holding families appreciated the well-organized way of life in the US which made their daily lives hassle-free. Therefore, family-friendly policies helped student visa-holding families to create a sense of belonging. When the policies were family-friendly, all families found ways to benefit. This included student visa-holding families because they also benefited directly or indirectly from inclusive family policies and systems; it made them feel that they were also included in the society.

Discussion

The six themes that emerged from the data were family support, meaningful opportunities, supportive community, familiarity, positive attitude, and supportive policies resemble how the participants build a sense of belonging as they live in the US. Some of the themes fit in with the belonging hypothesis (Leary & Baumeister, 2017). The belonging hypothesis suggests that meaningful relationships and opportunities helps one to feel belonging. The first two themes, family support, and meaningful opportunities speak directly to this hypothesis. Participants in the study spoke that having their spouses living with them, having access to families who are living back home via online and physically helps them to feel connected to their family. South Asian cultures, people value the connections and respect for family (Ibrahim, Ohnishi, & Sandhu, 1997). For these families, family respect comes through maintaining relationships. Furthermore, family includes more than just children; parents and spouses, cousins, grandparents, uncle, and aunts are also close family members. Thus, even when

they live oceans apart, when families can visit each other in the US or home countries, it provides a sense of belonging to their families. No matter where they live, access to family helps them to feel comfortable. Thus, this ability helps them to create a sense of belonging to their family.

The belonging hypothesis suggests that opportunities are important for one to create a sense of belonging. In this hypothesis, opportunities are considered in terms of access to build and maintain relationships. This study was able to find that for student visa-holding families' opportunities are valuable and it is not just limited to relationships. For example, these families value opportunities to develop their career and personal goals. Student visa-holding families are a well-educated and talented group of people. Thus, it is not a surprise that scholarships, educational advances, leadership, and other career development opportunities make them feel happy and satisfied.

Moreover, because they highly value the family, when meaningful opportunities are available to their spouses it makes these families happy. This was showcased by Manjil's statement about when his wife also got the opportunity to study in US, Manjil said "That also helped us economically, and also in personal aspirations to pursue what we wanted as a couple. That was really good. It also created more balance in our family as a couple because it broke the stigma of just one person, be it male or female, working, and the other person staying at home." Like Manjil, families feel that when opportunities are there for both spouses they get a sense of balance in life. In other words, meaningful opportunities for the entire family balance family dynamics, which is a powerful aspect for families to function well in society.

Furthermore, the current social and political view of families from the international community is that they are only dependent on the systems and are a weight on the host society.

However, student visa-holding families show that they value opportunities to give back to the home and local community. Thus, they seek opportunities such as charity and grants to give back to society. It helps them to feel that they are responsible and productive members of the society. Thus, the study finding breaks the two different stigmas on international families that they are dependents on the host society and that they do not provide back to their home country communities.

A supportive community helps student visa-holding families. These families have close ties to their educational institutes thus, families feel that educational institutes play a big part in their community. For example, participants mentioned the importance of their research groups, cohorts, other international students, student organizations and teachers in their lives. Moreover, the university is the bridge that connects them to the local community. Participants shared their experiences around host families and relationships they were able to build because of the university. Additionally, families felt that they are part of the community when they can share common time with other international, same national and local families. Moments such as celebrating festivals, attending events, and getting together with other families for dinner and tea, give these families place in a community that creates a sense of belonging.

Familiarity helped families to adopt and adjust faster to their lives in the US. When they adjust fast, they are in a better position to gain a sense of belonging. Adjusting to a new country can be very challenging, and that can bring lots of stress to families and individuals (Hagerty, Lynch-Sauer, Patusky, Bouwsema, & Collier, 1992; Reynolds et al.). This study's participants mentioned that previous experiences in living abroad, having familiar people around, having researched before coming, helped them to minimize that stress. In addition, familiarity develops

as time progresses. As families lived longer in the US, they felt that they have created a sense of belonging to particular US culture and community.

A positive attitude helped families to create a sense of belonging. All of the participants in the study spoke about their positive hope for the future. They believed that the ability to study in US universities as a prestigious opportunity. This prestigious opportunity helped them to hold a positive attitude.

US visa policy is very strict, highly vetted and regulated through the Department of Home Land Security and Student and Exchange Visitor Information System (Gopal, 2016). Student visa-holding families came to the US with high hopes and dreams, yet there is no guarantee that they will be able to build a long-term residential plan in the US. Despite the dilemma families, find their ways to best adjust and accept their reality. They accepted that they might have to return to home countries leaving their dreams here in the US. On the other hand, some families preferred not to think far ahead, rather they give their full dedication and hard work to succeed in their education program, which includes publishing research papers, getting good grades, networking and developing experiences related to their careers. This positive attitude helped these families to be hopeful for their future.

Finally, policy played an important role in shaping the life of student visa holders. University policies, visa-related policies, general policies and systems that are in place impacted their lives. Participants described their universities as a safe place where they can benefit from many policies in place. Often they have the freedom to join any organizations, classes, scholarships, university family housing, and insurance policies that act as a safety net in their lives. Also, supportive elements of the visa policy made them feel supported in the US. For example, some participants appreciated the F-2 visa policy where their spouses can live with

them and tourist-visiting visa policy where their parents can visit them in the US. These families benefit from general family-friendly policies as well. Suggesting that inclusive policies can bring benefits to diverse families in the US

Further, it was evident that supportive policies overlapped with the rest of the five themes. Suggesting that supportive policies helped families to find family support, meaningful opportunities, supportive community, familiarity and to develop a positive attitude. For example, because of the F-2 (dependent) visa policy, the primary visa holder's (F-1) spouse could come to the US and live as a family while supporting each other. University housing policy provides an affordable, good quality environment to live where they were able to build their supportive community. As a result of the inclusive policies of the university, student visa holders could join any student organization. On the other hand, when the policies are not supportive of families, it hinders the ability to create a sense of belonging. For example, due to a lack of supportive policies that allow them to build careers in the US, they tend to have a discouraging attitude towards their future. It makes it harder for these families to come up with longer family plans, thus they often tend to focus on their current situation and not think about the future. Finally, where there are lack of macro-level policies families' values the micro-level policies where it helps them feel secure in the community. As a result university and educational institute role becomes the one of the biggest strength families' values. This helps them view their lives in US through a positive lenses. Overall, student visa-holding families could create a sense of belonging when all these themes are interacting with each other. Among them, a supportive policy can open gates to different ways to create a sense of belonging.

Implications

Through conducting this study as my master's final creative component, I was able to identify ways student visa-holding families are developing a sense of belonging. In addition, this study provides an overview of the roles of student visa policies and how it interacts with ways in which student visa-holding families develop a sense of belonging. Study finding suggest that micro-level support and policies through universities and local institutions role acts as the biggest support towards helping them to create a sense of belonging. Thus, the findings may be beneficial to international student affairs practitioners to identify ways in which institutional and local community involvement can be developed to support these families.

Limitations and Future Directions

This study only includes seven participants. It will be beneficial to increase the number of interviews to continue to understand student visa-holding families' experiences. In addition, the study only included participants from few of the south Asian countries. India is one of the countries that send the highest number of student visa holders to the US (Gopal, 2016). Not having the representation of such an important population can be a missed opportunity in this research. Moreover, while analyzing the data, only the principal investigator (first author) of the paper did engage in active coding. Even though a member check was conducted in this study, it would be beneficial to see if another researcher would code the data similarly as the first author of this paper.

Finally, the participant's ability to speak to their understanding of policy and its impact in their life was very limited. Only a few participants were able to share their experiences related to policies. Some were hesitant to share their true opinion of the policies. There were times, when the participant asked the author not to record when they were giving their true opinions and

experiences. Future studies need to address this issue in order to bring more insight into the role of policy in the lives of student visa-holding families. Finding ways to make participants feel comfortable and secured to share information can be an area to focus to solve these issues.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the current study was able to find that student visa-holding families from south Asia create a sense of belonging with the help of family support, meaningful opportunities, supportive community, familiarity, positive attitude, and supportive policies. Supportive policies play a big role in each of the five other ways of creating a sense of belonging. Policies can enhance the accessibility to support systems that student visa-holding families use to create a sense of belonging. This study had several limitations such as the limited number of participants, which led to only seven interviews. Future, studies, and steps can utilize innovative methods to get participants to share their insight into the role of visa policy in their day to day life. The current finding of the study is beneficial to universities and organizations that are working to create an inclusive environment for diverse families in the US.

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Appendix A: IRB Approval Form



View xForm - IRB Application

One Form to Rule Them All - v1.3 Reasonable Person

Application Data Entry

- Submitted 9/11/2019 3:31:51 PM ET by Gammana Liyanage, Maneesha

Basic Study and PI Information

! The **2018 Common Rule** takes effect on January 21, 2019. If you have submitted an application in IRBManager before, you may notice some new or updated questions and/or response options. For applications that are copied for amendment, please read the questions and responses in the application carefully to ensure your saved responses still apply.

Basic Study Information

Submitter

Gammana Liyanage, Maneesha

Email: maneeshal@iastate.edu

Phone:

Title of Project

Creating sense of belonging among student visa-holding families in the US

Please enter the email address of the principal investigator.

If you are the principal investigator, please enter your own email address.

Gammana Liyanage, Maneesha

Email: maneeshal@iastate.edu

Phone:

CITI Human Subjects Training Expiration

09/11/2117

Additional PI and Study Information

PI Level

Graduate/Undergrad Student

Please click add contact and enter the investigator that will be supervising this research.

Gudmunson, Clinton G

Email: cgudmuns@iastate.edu Business: 515-294-8439

Students or persons in certain other position classifications are not eligible to serve as PI without a Supervising Investigator. The Supervising Investigator must be at the appropriate level (Tenured, Tenure-Eligible and NTER Faculty (Category 1) or Professional and Scientific (P&S) - P37 and Above (Category 2)). Please see the [PI Eligibility Guidelines](#) for more information.

Co-I CITI Human Subjects Training Expiration

Contact	Expires (as of 09/11/2019)
Gudmunson, Clinton G	04/04/2118

Type of Project

Graduate Level Creative Component/Capstone

Has the POS Committee reviewed and approved the proposed procedures for this thesis/dissertation?

Yes

Supervising Investigator's Department Chair

Weems, Carl Ph.D.

Email: cweems@iastate.edu

Business: 515-294-9659

Select the Department overseeing this research.

This is typically the department of the PI unless the study requires a Supervising Investigator. In that instance, it should be the Supervising Investigator's department.

Human Development and Family Studies

Department Chair for this Research

Weems, Carl Ph.D.

Email: cweems@iastate.edu

Business: 515-294-9659

Note about Recruitment Registries or Data/Specimen Repositories:

- A stand-alone IRB protocol is required when establishing a recruitment registry AND/OR data or specimen repository.
- If you are obtaining data from an existing repository, or using an existing recruitment registry as part of a Human Subjects Research Project, check "Human Subjects Research Project".

This application is seeking IRB approval for:

Human Subjects Research Project

Is or will the project be externally funded?

No

External funding may come from federal funds, state or local government agencies, non-profit institutions, or for-profit businesses. Internal department funding is not considered "external" funding.

Will researchers at other institution(s) be involved in any human subjects research activities?

No

Select "**yes**" if individuals at other institutions will be involved as **researchers** on the project who do one or more of the following:

- Direct recruitment of research participants,
- Obtaining informed consent from research participants,
- Interacting with research participants to collect data,
- Administering any research interventions, tests, procedures, etc., or
- Access to identifiable research data.

Select "**no**" if:

- You are conducting research at a collaborating site, but the only role of persons at that site is to **serve as research participants**, or
- Activities of collaborating researchers do not involve human subjects (e.g., contributing to methodology, analysis of de-identified data, etc.).

Key Personnel

Key personnel include any individuals who will be involved with collecting data from participants, involved with recruitment or obtaining informed consent, or who have access to their private and identifiable data. For more information, please see [Human Subjects – Persons Required to Obtain IRB Training](#).

Key personnel other than the PI and/or Supervising Investigator working on this study will need to be listed in response to one of the two questions below. List all personnel, their relevant qualifications, and define their roles in the research. This information is intended to inform the committee of the training and background related to the specific procedures that each person will perform on the project.

Please be sure to select the appropriate table for the personnel:

- **Table 1** - ISU Faculty and P&S Staff ONLY, OR
- **Table 2** - All Other Personnel (i.e., ISU research assistants, ISU student personnel, hourly staff, transcribers, coders, non-ISU investigators, etc.)

NOTE: All ISU Faculty and P&S Staff listed on this application will receive an automated email from IRBManager after the PI or Supervising Investigator Signature stages instructing them to indicate if they have any Significant Financial Interest(s) related to this study. All will be prompted to verify with electronic signature prior to the form moving to the Department Chair Signature stage.

Do you have any personnel other than the PI and Supervising Investigator who are responsible for the design, conduct, reporting of the human subjects aspects of this research, or are involved in any human subjects research activities?

No

General Overview - Purpose and Expected Benefits

Research Objectives - Briefly explain in language understandable to a layperson the purpose and specific aims(s) of the study.

Creating a sense of belonging is the potential stress associated with being a transnational family. The purpose of this study is to understand how student visa-holding families create a sense of belonging as they live in the United States and to understand how student visa policy may be implicated in establishing a sense of belonging.

Aim 1: To examine how college student visa-holding families create a sense of belonging as they live in the United States

Aim 2: To examine college student visa policy with a focus on how it impacts sense of belonging.

Broader Impacts/Significance - Explain in language understandable to a layperson why this research is important and how the information gained in this study is expected to advance knowledge and/or serve the good of society.

Be sure to include justification as to why this study is necessary.

Past research on transnational families and stress has suggested that sense of belonging is one of the largest stresses faced by these families. Additionally, past research suggests that sense of belonging is an important contributor to individual and family well-being, especially for good mental health, and it is theorized to be a fundamental human need. Although some studies investigating sense of belonging among immigrant families, including some studies of racial minority college students, have been published, there is a profound knowledge gap about how transnational student visa-holding families create sense of belonging while living in the United States. This study will provide information about how visa-holding families create a sense of belonging. The study is important for the field of human development and family studies, to shed light on opportunities for reducing stress, by helping students, families, and educational institutions streamline the production of human capital in an understudied population.

Benefits to Participants - Are there any expected direct benefits to research participants from participation in the research?

Compensation (i.e., monetary, course credit, etc.) is not considered to be a benefit of participation in research.

No

Research Plan - Participant Characteristics**Inclusion Criteria - Describe the specific characteristics of persons that will be included in your study, and provide justification for these requirements.**

Participants in this study, whether they be the initial contacts, or spouses of the initial contacts must each individually hold a non-immigrant visa (F1 & F2 student visa status) because visa policy likely plays an important role in shaping how families build and reshape personal and familial identities as they live in the United States. If the spouse of an F1 or F2 visa-holding student does not also hold an F1 or F2 visa, they will not be permitted to participate in the study. Beyond the student visa holder, this study will also include interviews with adult family members (i.e. spouses) living with the student visa holder and these family members may also have related visa statuses. These spousal interviews are relevant for a phenomenological theoretical framework which relies upon multiple sources of information to triangulate information and so that the study has less reporting of individual biases regarding the ways that non-immigrant families function in the United States. Visa policy, like many other policies in the US are typically implemented with an individual in my mind, but nevertheless impact family systems. It is important to understand how a family, an entity which is seldom individualistic, functions under such visa policies. Participants should be from one of the following South Asian countries: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Maldives, Nepal, India, Pakistan, or Sri Lanka (not all these nationalities need to be sampled in the study). Countries in South Asia share important historical, cultural, and socioeconomic similarities that will ensure some level of homogeneity for the study. At the same time, the varieties of culture, customs, and policies among these locations will permit important meaningful comparisons and contrasts. Most importantly, the PI of the study has experiential and educational knowledge about this region of the world and familiarity with requirements for transitioning to educational institutions in the United States. Planning for researcher positionality is a key factor for producing rigorous qualitative research and similarity with the sample respondents is important for quality data collection. In short, these criteria will help ensure that participants have experienced the phenomena under investigation. The screening for nationality will be examined at the individual level. All participants of the study need to be holding F1 or F2 student visa. Spouse and other adult family member of a student participant who wish to participate in the study must be holding an F1 or F2 visa as well.

Exclusion Criteria - Describe the characteristics of any persons who will not be allowed to participate in your study, and provide justification for their exclusion.

There is a type of immigrant student--those with permanent visas (e.g. green card holders), which will be excluded from the study. The justification for this exclusion is based on the fact that expectations for those that have temporarily immigrated versus those that have permanently immigrated indicate very different conditions within which a person may seek and/or obtain a sense of belonging. For instance, those with an F1 or F2 student visa will likely seek belonging in context of a higher education setting, versus very different work settings for many green-card holders. When visas are impermanent, there is also the greater possibility for not seeking a sense of belonging--or remaining an outsider. Without this important limitation, the variability in context would threaten the ability to form generalizations, achieve saturation of the findings, and adequately contextualize the conclusions of the study. Other limiting criteria are necessary to cohere with the the skill-set and experience of the PI including excluding individuals from places other than South Asia and not collecting data from minors under age 18.

Do you intend, or is it likely that your study will include any persons from the following populations? Please check all that apply.

No answer provided.

Participant Enrollment

Please indicate the maximum number of participants you expect to enroll in your study. This number should include the total number of participants across all groups and account for any enrollment that may be needed due to attrition, withdrawals, screen failures, etc.

20

Please include details about the planned enrollment numbers such as how many you expect to include in any groups or conditions, how many you expect to screen versus fully enroll in the study, etc.

Snowball sampling will be the recruitment method for the study. The study PI will reach out to a number of participants who are thought may qualify and ask all those that qualify and participate to help me find others to participate. Recruitment message (invitation email) will be sent to potential participants and individuals can decide to reach out to PI if they like to participate in the study. Enrollment of new participants will take place until saturation of findings in the data is achieved and/or the PI encounters limitations regarding time and resources for incorporating participants, as well as being subject to the recruitment number indicated above. These are common methodological practices in qualitative studies in this area of research, as indicated by published research.

Research Plan - Data Collection Procedures

Research Procedures - Using layperson's terminology, please describe in detail your plans for collecting data from participants. Include a description of all procedures, tasks, or interventions participants will be asked to complete during the research (e.g., random assignment, any conditions or treatment groups into which participants will be divided, mail survey or interview procedures, observation protocols, sensors to be worn, amount of blood drawn, etc.).

Please ensure that references to materials attached throughout the application are clear. We recommend that attachments (i.e., surveys, interview protocols, copies of stimuli, instructions for tasks, etc.) are clearly named and when mentioning them in this section those names are used.

Potential participants will be recruited using a snowball sampling method. Initial communications will be through email to pass the recruitment message to potential participants. So, individuals can make the choice to be part of the study and proceed to contact the primary investigator (Maneesha Gammana). An informed consent form will be sent in advance with instructions for enrolling in the study and participants will sign a printed copy before beginning the interview. After signing the consent form, there will also be a brief self-report paper survey which will assess common demographic questions and which contains a 13-question index measure of sense of belonging. If the meeting take place online, the survey will be sent ahead of time as an ISU qualtrics survey. Note, that sense of belonging will also be the overall subject of the following qualitative interview which is to be open-ended and aided by an interview schedule in the possession of the interviewer. It will be preferred to meet in person, or face-to-face using computer video conferencing and originating from a convenient and comfortable location approved by the participant such as a home, office, or public conference room. If the interview is conducted via online, only the participants audio will be recorded. It is expected that each interview will last between 1.0-1.5 hours. Once consent is obtained via the participant's signature, the interview will be audio recorded using a digital device. Later, the recording will be transcribed by a professional from rev.com that has often been hired by other HDFS faculty or possibly by the project PI (if funds for professional transcription become exhausted). The demographic and sense of belonging scale data will be appended to the transcript, minus identifying information and names mentioned by the participants in the interview will be replaced with pseudonyms. The interviewer will take a limited number of notes, before, during, or after the interview to aid in documenting discoveries, forming ideas, and for assisting in the documentation.

All interviews are conducted alone with an individual even if they are from the household. Spouses and other adults of a student participant are not mandatory to participate in the study. Only if an individual family member fit to this study's participant selection criteria and then agrees to participate, I will conduct a separate interview, after following the same consent procedure as outlined in this application. If the multiple members of the family agree to a participant, for example, both the spouses who are holding a student visa, they will be completing the same study procedure which includes completing the survey and interview.

o

Will your research include any types of recordings that may capture private or identifiable information?

These selections must be described in detail in the research procedures above.

Audio recordings

Secondary Use of Data or Information from Records, Repositories, Databases, or Similar Sources

Does your study involve obtaining information or data about people from records, (e.g., student records, medical records, etc.), repositories (e.g., tissue banks, biospecimen repositories, etc.), or other similar sources (e.g., government databases, data from other studies, etc.)?

No

Will any devices be used for data collection (i.e., eye trackers, activity monitors, heart rate monitors, EEG, MRI, DEXA, other sensors, etc.)?

No

Does the research involve collection of data from observation of people's behaviors or activities?

No

Will participants be *deceived or misled* about anything during the study, and/or do you plan to *intentionally withhold* information from participants, such as the full purpose of the study, a full description of procedures, etc.? Check all that apply.

NO - ALL participants will be fully informed about the study.

Will your participants consume any substances for purposes of your research (e.g., food, beverage, dietary supplements, drugs, vitamins, etc.)?

No

Does this project involve human blood components, body fluids, tissues, or human cell or tissue cultures (primary or immortalized)?

No

Will the research take place in an international setting?

No

Do you believe your study may qualify for exemption?



Yes

Please provide justification as to why you feel your study falls into one or more of the categories of exempt research.

We believe our study may qualify for exemption because it meets the three criteria suggested by the reviewer Rosenfeld, Deirdre. If participants are adults.

2. The research only includes interactions involving survey and interview procedures.

3. You will collect private, identifiable information from participants, and you plan to maintain participant confidentiality when reporting results.

Data Collection Materials

Data Collection materials are *OPTIONAL* for Exempt studies. You may attach these materials if you feel it will help the IRB office with the review your study. - DO NOT attach recruitment and consent materials for Exempt studies.

Attach any materials related to the data collection and screening procedures (e.g., survey questions, interview questions, medical history questionnaire, focus group protocols, descriptions of stimuli, descriptions of tasks, etc.) you will use for this study.

- DO NOT attach recruitment and informed consent materials here. If required, you will be asked to attach these items in later sections of the form.
- If you have already attached data collection materials (i.e. observation protocol, etc.) as a response to another question, you do not need to upload it here.

Interview Questions v2.docx

Interview Questions

Sense_of_Belonging_Survey (1).docx

Surveys/Questionnaires

Discomfort or Risk to Participants

Discomfort or Risk
<p>Are there any foreseeable discomfort or risk to participants from taking part in your research?</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Do you foresee any <u>physical</u> discomfort/risk to participants?</p> <p><i>Examples may include: injury, bruising from a blood draw, pain, side-effects from drugs administered, allergic reactions, etc.</i></p> <p>No</p>
<p>Do you foresee any <u>psychological</u> discomfort/risk to participants?</p> <p><i>Examples may include: emotional discomfort from answering questions, stress or anxiety from procedures, mood alterations, viewing offensive or "shocking" materials, etc.</i></p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Please describe the psychological discomfort/risk and explain how each will be mitigated or minimized.</p> <p>Participants may experience risks or discomforts such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embarrassment or emotional discomfort from answering demographic questions in the brief quantitative self-assessment or during the open-ended interview. • Concern about being audio recorded. • Discomfort with regard to being overheard by a friend or family member if the interview is held in a common area. • Frustration with one's limited ability to fully address open-ended questions in the English language. • Concerns about possible practical or political risks in acknowledging information about the details of their visa status or related visa-holding processes. <p>Plans to mitigate these risks include: Providing an interviewer that has similar experiential knowledge and background to the participants, holding interviews in a location approved by the participants, informing participants in advance of their rights to refuse answers to questions or to have questions reframed, and watching the body language and circumstances to steer conversations away from potentially threatening queries or lines of questioning, and keeping the interview at a pace that allows for building rapport with the interviewer and overly positive or negative emotions.</p>
<p>Do you foresee any <u>informational</u> or <u>social</u> discomfort/risk to participants?</p> <p><i>Examples may include: harm if information collected about the participant were disclosed or overheard, such as embarrassment, retribution, harm to reputation or stigmatization, disruption of personal or family relationships, disruption of employment or workplace relationships, etc.</i></p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>Please describe the informational or social discomfort/risk and explain how each will be mitigated or minimized.</p> <p>As mentioned above, if the participants chooses to interview in a common area such as a home or office space, there is the potential for being overheard by a friend or family member. This could cause some discomfort if the participant finds it was difficult to keep the interview private. This will be mitigated indicating to the participant that the interviewer is willing to move to a more private location or to postpone a portion of the interview, should such situations arise or seem apparent.</p>
<p>Do you foresee any <u>legal</u> discomfort/risk to participants?</p> <p><i>Examples may include: criminal liability if information about participants' illegal behaviors is collected, etc.</i></p> <p>No</p>
<p>Do you foresee any <u>other</u> discomfort/risk to participants, given the setting of your research?</p> <p>No</p>
Data and Safety Monitoring
<p>Is a data safety and monitoring plan required for this study? <i>(This relates primarily to Clinical Trials.)</i></p> <p>No</p>
Recruitment and Informed Consent

Informed Consent for Exempt Research

Although your research may be "exempt" from many regulatory requirements, it is not exempt from important ethical considerations such as informing potential participants about the research and allowing that they voluntarily agree to take part. If children are included in the study, it is important to obtain their agreement and that of a parent.

Use of a formal informed consent document containing all of the [elements of consent](#) is not required for exempt research. However, the Iowa State University IRB expects investigators to provide, at minimum, the following information to prospective participants (and their parent/legal guardian) prior to enrollment in the study:

- A statement that the project involves research,
- A general description of the study procedures and time commitment,
- A description of any plans to audio or video record participants,
- A statement that participation is voluntary,
- A statement that the participant may skip any questions they do not feel comfortable answering in a survey or interview, and
- The measures that will be used to ensure the privacy of participants and confidentiality of the data will be protected.



The IRB understands that obtaining informed consent may not be feasible in some situations, such as obtaining large data sets from existing records where contacting persons is not possible or practicable. However, researchers should be aware that research that involves obtaining existing data, documents, specimens, etc. may [require](#) informed consent if the information is protected by regulation (e.g. FERPA, HIPAA, etc.) and includes any type of identifier (as defined by either FERPA or HIPAA regulations).

Please confirm that you will implement a consent process that addresses all of the following:

- **Participants will receive the information above in a manner that promotes voluntary agreement to participate;**
- **Participants will have an opportunity to agree before research procedures begin; and**
- **If the study involves deception or incomplete disclosure, participants will be explicitly informed prior to taking part in the study that they will be unaware of or misled regarding the nature or purposes of the research.**

Yes

Translation**Translation of Information or Materials**

In order to facilitate meaningful informed consent, recruitment and informed consent materials must be in a language understandable to the participants. If your study will include individuals who do not read or speak English, recruitment and consent materials must be translated into the appropriate languages.

Please check the following to describe your plans.

All participants are expected to be fluent in English. Translation is not required.

Compensation**Compensation**

Will participants receive any compensation (i.e., monetary, course credit, etc.) for their participation in your research?

No

Privacy**Describe how participants' privacy will be protected during recruitment and data collection.**

For example, discussions/procedures will be conducted in private locations, messages regarding the research will not be left on answering machines without permission of participant, how documents or recordings will be kept secure while in the field and during transmission, etc.

When implementing snowball recruitment procedure, I will ask participants to share the study recruitment message (email invitation) with the potential participants. Then, if individuals are interested, he/she can reach out to me to continue with the study. For example, a student visa holding individual can share the recruitment message with the other spouse who is also holding a student visa holder, then the spouse can make an individual choice whether he/she wants to be part of this study. Interviews with participants may take place in a participant's home, a private office, or some private-public location (e.g. library meeting room). If the interview happens online both parties will be located in a private location. The completed survey will be kept in an envelope in the hands of the interviewer immediate possession of the interviewer until scanned to cybox and then paper copy shredded. This will be done as soon each interview is completed. In Audio recordings will be immediately transferred from the digital recording device to ISU's CyBox following each interview. The recordings will be uploaded to the secure website of the professional transcriber from rev.com commonly used among HDFS department faculty and returned to be stored again in CyBox with resulting transcripts. The participant's identifiers will be replaced in the transcripts with pseudonyms and once the audio data and transcripts are complete all contact information will be shredded or removed from electronic devices (e.g. email and cell phone lists connecting the participant to the study).

Data Security

Minimum Data Security Standards

Iowa State University established a [data security policy](#) in 2015, which establishes minimum security standards. The policy has established four classifications of data (Restricted, High, Moderate, Low). Research data is classified as "moderate", as such, [security standards](#) outlined for moderate level data apply – unless the research data includes information that falls into one of the higher levels of classification (e.g., FERPA protected, HIPAA protected, etc.) Investigators should follow the [Minimum Security Standards](#) appropriate for the classification of their data.

You will first select the classification level that applies to your research. Appropriate classification is based on the nature and sensitivity of the data. You will next be asked to confirm your agreement to implement the applicable minimum security standards that apply to the data classification level selected for your research project. **Principal Investigators and Supervising Investigators are responsible for ensuring correct implementation of these standards.** You are strongly encouraged to work with departmental, college, or University IT staff as needed.

Please select from the options below to indicate the sensitivity level/data classification that applies to your study.

MODERATE - Includes: all research data, unless High or Restricted

I agree to implement the [Minimum Security Standards](#) required for the Moderate Classification specified by ISU Policy for [all electronic data/records](#) for this research. I will consult with IT staff, as needed, to ensure these standards are implemented properly.



Examples of minimum security standards include, but are not limited to:

- **Maintaining system patches and updates** to reduce the risk of security threats. Removing default passwords and configurations supplied by vendors.
- **Restricting user access.** Using multi-factor authentication when available. Controlling access and limiting to minimum necessary approved study personnel. Using least-privileged user accounts when possible.
- Implementing **encryption protection** (at rest and in transit) for research data. Encryption is required for Cloud storage, mobile or portable devices (e.g., laptops, tablets, flash drives, external hard drives, cell phones, etc.). **Cybox is an approved cloud-storage option.**
- Providing **awareness and training** to all personnel to safeguard system and information.
 - Ensuring personnel using shared devices (e.g., personal devices, devices in labs or public settings, etc.) understand and follow procedures to prevent unauthorized or unintentional access (e.g., log out of the system immediately after use, close browsers, etc.).
- Performing a risk assessment and providing contingency planning - including scheduled backups.
- **Labeling external media** (such as optical disks, flash drives, external hard drives) with contact information, in order to protect data.
- Reporting any Incident to the Solution Center of ITS within 24 hours.
- Enabling session timeouts and screen locks.

I agree.

I agree to implement the following security measures for all identifiable [physical data or records](#)

- Secure storage methods that prevent unauthorized access (e.g., locked cabinets, safes, drawers, freezers, etc.), except when being directly used by a member of the research team.
- Access is controlled and limited solely to the minimum necessary IRB-approved research team members or professional service providers (i.e., transcriptionists, translators, etc.)
- Identifying information (including "keys" linking identifiers to codes) must be securely and effectively destroyed as soon as it is no longer needed to complete the research or meet regulatory record keeping requirements.

I agree.

Confidentiality

Identifiers

Will you obtain any of the following identifiers about participants at any stage of the research (e.g., recruitment, data collection, from existing records, etc.)? Please select from the list below.

Names
Phone/fax numbers
Email addresses
Physical addresses

Describe the reason it is necessary to obtain this identifiable information and how it will be used (e.g., recruitment, matching data across time points, only to verify informed consent, follow-up or reminders, etc.). Please be sure to indicate if this information will ever be linked to participant responses, even temporarily.

This information will be gathered only to contact participants about scheduling, reminders, and if followup is needed (member check). Participant identifiers will not be sought nor recorded (unless inadvertently volunteered in the audio recording) or transcripts (identifying information, including names, will be redacted or replaced with pseudonyms).

The same approach will be the same for in-person and Qualtrics survey interviews. Each participant will be given a 4 digit ID code to use in place of identifying information (i.e. names). The list matching names and codes will be stored electronically in Cybox.

Describe your process for ensuring confidentiality of participant identifiers during all stages of the research. This includes removing participant identifiers from the study data, secure disposal of any recruitment lists, etc. If any of the data cannot be fully de-identified (e.g., video recordings, photographs, detailed case study information, etc.), please explain.

The description should include but is not limited to:

- *Timing of de-identification in relation to data collection,*
- *Plans to de-identify video recordings or photographs, when applicable,*
- *Plans to de-identify transcripts, when applicable,*
- *Any plans to replace identifiers with ID codes or pseudonyms,*
- *Whether or not you will retain a key linking identifiers with ID codes,*
 - *Where the key will be stored to maintain its security,*
 - *When the key will be destroyed*

Identifying information will be included on the consent form (i.e. names and contact information). The interviews will be recorded, but the participant will not be asked for identifying information during interviews. After the interviews have been transcribed, I will search the transcripts for identifying information and remove and/or replace with pseudonyms. The recordings, transcripts, and scanned consent forms will be located in CYBOX and the paper version of the consent forms shredded at the earliest convenient time. Personal notes will also be taken during the interview and scanned into CYBOX. These files will be temporarily downloaded as needed for analysis on password protected computers, but deleted from the working computer once the analyses are completed.

The identifier will be removed after receiving the transcripts and pseudonyms will be used instead of the names. We have no need to keep the identifiers after the transcripts are completed. In other word we will not use key linking pseudonyms with identifiers.

After the transcripts are complete, we will copy and paste the results of the Qualtrics survey (which does not have to identify information) into the transcript document stored in Cybox.

Audio files will retain until after the results of the study being fully disseminated. This practice retaining transcriptions after dissemination will help us to assure data quality, which important for us, reviewers and editors. After dissemination recordings will be destroyed. Until then audio recordings will be kept in Cybox.

Preventing Indirect Identification in Study Results

What specific steps will you take to ensure participants are not identifiable (directly or indirectly via deductive disclosure) when research results are reported? If you cannot or do not plan to maintain confidentiality, please explain.

I will only ever ask for a name, contact information (i.e. phone number or email address), and physical address (if needed) and no other identifiers. I will request identifying information only on the consent form, and it will be stored separately from interview recordings and transcripts. I will scan consent forms at the earliest convenience and shred paper copies--storing the electronic version in CYBOX. I will replace names in interviews with pseudonyms in the transcripts.

When describing a sample as a whole we will never mention categories in which there is only one single participant. For example, if we only had one participant from Bangladesh we will only say that some came from other countries.

When discussing individual we will replace the real name with pseudonyms. In seldom mention other characteristics. Unless there are significant proportions of the sample of those categories. For example, if we had a similar number of man and women then we mention individual gender if that is important for the context. The number of descriptors of an individual will be limited to one or two characteristics in addition to the pseudonym. We will make sure that identifying participants are not possible with the descriptions we offer. We will carefully review the descriptions of the same to ensure that it is not possible to identify any individual or small group of individuals. Multiple demographic descriptions will only be used to describe the sample as a whole (e.g. "they came from these countries" and "they were within these age ranges" etc. if any category is only held by a single participant, it will not be mentioned (counted as "other" or a pseudonym will be used in place). In other words, I will make sure not to mention individual characteristics that will lead to identifying participants.

In addition to the above steps, we will especially review our work regarding this issue before submission to journals, conference, and other venues. We will make changes if needed.

We will not identify the name of the universities in our study.

Access to Study Data or Records

Will anyone other than those on the research team have access to any identifiable study data or records?

No

Will the audio or video recordings be transcribed?

Yes

Who will handle the transcriptions?

Member of the research team (who will be or is included as key personnel)
Professional transcription service

Please specify the service you will use for transcription and how participants' confidentiality will be protected during the transcription process.

Be sure to include a description of the process for the following:

- *securely transmitting recordings to the service*
- *how the transcriptions will be securely transmitted back*
- *how the recordings will be handled after transcription (i.e., will they be destroyed and by whom),*

Please note that any individuals that are not affiliated with a professional transcription service must be listed as key personnel on this study.

Audio recordings will be obtained using a digital device. After that, I will save it in Cybox. Then I will upload each file to the online account transcribing service will create for me. The service I will be using is www.rev.com. This service was recommended by the Human Development and Family Studies department and commonly used by the faculty. This service has an online platform where I can upload each of the audio files. The transcribing service will send back each of the transcripts back to my Iowa state email address as soon as transcripts arrive I will save them to the Cybox. Audio recordings will be deleted from the online rev platform upon the completion of the transcription. We will follow up with rev.com, after transcripts have been completed, to verify that they have destroyed all related audio and text files.

Attach any confidentiality agreements that relate to the transcription process for this study. Attaching the agreement is optional, but often requested when someone other than a member of the research team will handle transcription.

No answer provided.

Certificate of Confidentiality

Certificates of Confidentiality (CoC) are designed to protect identifiable research records against forced disclosure (e.g., subpoena), and may be important to protect certain types of information (e.g., data on illegal behaviors, genetic information, certain kinds of diseases or mental health conditions, etc.). When a CoC is in place, there are restrictions on how identifiable information about research participants may be disclosed or shared. Researchers must comply with these restrictions.

CoCs are obtained in one of two ways:

- 1. For NIH-funded research** - Research that involves collection or use of individually identifiable, sensitive information is automatically issued a CoC from NIH, and is subject to the corresponding disclosure restrictions outlined in [NIH Policy](#).
- 2. For other research** - CoCs can be sought from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) or Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in certain circumstances. Visit the [Certificates of Confidentiality Kiosk](#) for more information.

Have you or will you obtain a Federal Certificate of Confidentiality for this study?

No

Data Sharing or Future Use

Sharing Data is becoming increasingly common. Data-sharing may be *required* by funding agencies or journals. You may wish to share de-identified data and/or biospecimens with other researchers for secondary analysis or provide data for inclusion in a data or biospecimen repository. You or your research team may also wish to use the data for a future study. Please carefully consider future plans before answering this question.

Please select one of the following to indicate plans for sharing or using individual level data beyond the current research project.

Individual-level data or biospecimens (including de-identified data or biospecimens) obtained during this study will **MIGHT** be shared or used for future research, but we have no current plans or data-sharing requirements.

Please describe the circumstances under which data or biospecimens may or will be shared or used beyond the current study. This includes describing any known plans for future use, such as those specified in data sharing plans, any known repositories, etc. Be sure to specify what will be shared or used beyond this research study (e.g., data only, actual biospecimens, and/or data from biospecimens). If plans are unknown, indicate this, but describe reasonably foreseeable plans.

The transcripts will be kept for the possibility of more secondary research. Currently, there are no plans for doing secondary research with these data, but the data have scientific merit beyond the current project and should be preserved for future approved purposes. Consent forms and recordings are expected to not be used or accessed again for future studies.

We will never share the data in any form outside of the research team.

How will data be prepared to protect participants' confidentiality when shared or used in the future? If data includes video recordings, photographs, biometric identifiers, biospecimens, etc., be sure to indicate whether this information will be included when data are shared or used for another study.

Only transcripts will be used if future studies materialize. The transcripts will be de-identified.

How will you inform participants of plans for data sharing or use beyond the current study?

A statement about this possibility is to be included on the consent form.

Optional - Additional Considerations

Optional: Please share any information that you feel would be appropriate in assisting the IRB with review of your study. Examples may include historical background that is relevant to this study, important information about the research site(s), etc.

Please do not include information that should be included in prior questions within this application.

This is the first time the investigator has served as a PI, and she welcomes suggestions for improvement in the methodology. A graduate degree depends upon successful completion of this project and the PI will be standing by for IRB approval before proceeding with any of the next steps identified in this application. She thanks IRB officials for their attention to this application.

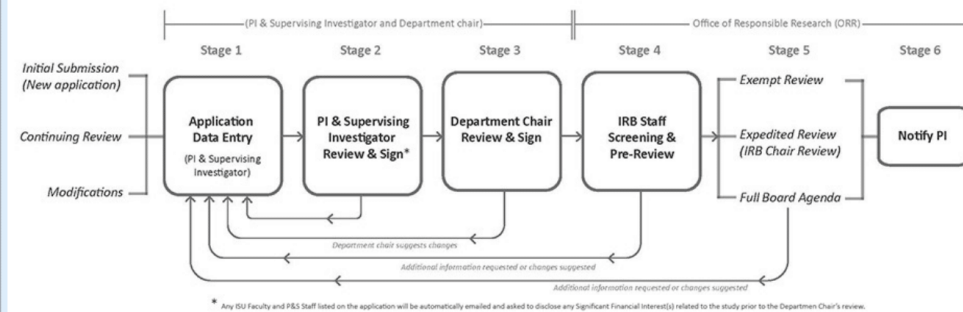
Optional: Attach any documents that you wish to share with the IRB to assist with the review of your study. Examples may include permission letters from research sites, supporting literature, etc.

Sense_of_Belonging_Survey.docx Misc/Other

Human Subjects Training CITI Check Summary

All current as of 01/01/0001 12:00:00 AM ET

Overview of the IRB Application Process:



PI Assurances and Signature for Self-Submission

In most cases, IRB review proceeds much more smoothly and quickly when submitted applications are complete, internally consistent, and clear. Before submitting, principal investigators should verify that the application meets these criteria and that human subjects protection issues are addressed.

Principal Investigator Assurances:

By electronically signing this application, I attest to the following:

The information provided in this application is complete, accurately represents all research plans, and is consistent with any proposal(s) submitted to external funding agencies. Misrepresentation of the research described in this or any other IRB application may constitute noncompliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct.
I agree.

I will provide proper oversight of this project and of project staff to ensure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected and that the research is conducted in accordance with the IRB-approved protocol. I have the necessary qualifications to carry out this study in a manner that protects the rights and welfare of human subjects. If the project is subject to FDA regulations, I will follow all FDA requirements as required of the investigator or sponsor-investigator, as applicable.
I agree.

No human subjects research activities will take place without prior review and approval by the IRB. The research activities proposed in this application will not begin until I receive written notification of IRB approval.
I agree.

Any problems or noncompliance will be promptly reported to the IRB. For reporting requirements, see Reporting Adverse Events and Unanticipated Problems and Policy on IRB Review of Protocol Deviations and Noncompliance for Non-exempt Research.
I agree.

If my formal affiliation with ISU ends, I will either ensure that the project is formally closed to IRB oversight, or I will notify the IRB of my intent to relinquish the role of principal investigator to another eligible researcher by sending a modification form with a change of principal investigator.
I agree.

Any changes to non-exempt research will receive IRB approval prior to implementation, unless the change is necessary to prevent an immediate hazard to subjects. If this research is granted exempt status, I agree that no changes will be made without prior IRB review that may increase risk to subjects or that could alter the exempt status of the study. I have or will review the document Modifications to Exempt Research, and will follow the specified guidelines.
I agree.

The IRB will be promptly informed of any addition of or change in federal funding for this study. I understand that approval of this application extends only to funding sources that are specifically referenced within and will not be used as documentation of approval for other funding sources.
I agree.

The research will not take place without the receipt of permission from cooperating institutions, when applicable. I understand that IRB approval of this project does not grant access to any facilities, materials, or data on which this research may depend. Such access must be granted by the unit with the relevant custodial authority.
I agree.

When appropriate for the study, approval will be obtained from other appropriate committees, such as the IACUC (if the research includes animals), the IBC (if the research involves biohazards), the Radiation Safety Committee (if the research involves DXA, x-rays or other radiation producing devices or procedures), etc.; background checks for staff will be obtained when the research involves working with children.
I agree.

When the human subjects research is complete, I will formally "close" the project to IRB oversight.
I agree.

I will retain research records for at least three years after the study is complete as required by federal regulations.
I agree.

All activities will be performed in accordance with all applicable federal, state, local, and Iowa State University policies.
I agree.

By entering my username and password using the sign button, I am electronically signing this form.

Signed Wednesday, September 11, 2019 3:31:34 PM ET by Gammana Liyanage, Maneesha

Be sure to click "Submit" on the next screen in order for your form to move forward in the submission process.

Supervising Investigator Review and Signature

- Submitted 9/11/2019 3:34:20 PM ET by Gudmunson, Clinton G

Supervising Investigator Review, Assurances and Signature

As supervising investigator, it is your responsibility to verify the application is complete, accurately reflects the study plans, and that human subjects protections are adequately addressed prior to submission.

Based on your review, is the application complete and ready to send to the IRB for review?

Yes

Supervising Investigator Assurances

By electronically signing this application, I certify that I have reviewed the contents of this application in its entirety, and I attest to the following:

The information provided is complete, accurately reflects the study plans, and human subjects protections are addressed. It is also consistent with any proposal(s) submitted to external funding agencies. Misrepresentation of the research described in this or any other IRB application may constitute noncompliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct.
I agree.

The proposed research is scientifically sound, likely to achieve its aim, and the knowledge that is expected to result has importance in the field of study
I agree.

I have the necessary qualifications to oversee this study. I agree to provide proper oversight of this project, the principal investigator, and of project staff to ensure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will ensure that the PI and project staff adhere to the IRB-approved protocol. If the project is subject to FDA regulations, I will ensure adherence to all FDA requirements as required of the investigator or sponsor-investigator, as applicable.
I agree.

No human subjects research activity will begin until it has been approved by the IRB and written notification has been received by the principal investigator.
I agree.

If I plan to leave ISU (either permanently or for an extended period of time) or determine I can no longer supervise this project, I will inform the principal investigator and the IRB with sufficient time for an alternate supervising investigator to be identified and assume responsibility for project oversight.
I agree.

If the Principal Investigator's formal affiliation with ISU ends, I will either ensure that the project is formally closed to IRB oversight, or I will notify the IRB of my intent to assume the role of principal investigator.
I agree.

Any changes to non-exempt research will receive IRB approval prior to implementation, unless the change is necessary to prevent an immediate hazard to subjects. If this research is granted exempt status, I agree that no changes will be made without prior IRB review that may increase risk to subjects or that could alter the exempt status of the study. I have, or will, review the document Modifications to Exempt Research, and will follow the specified guidelines.
I agree.

The IRB will be promptly informed of any addition of or change in federal funding for this study. I understand that approval of this application extends only to funding sources that are specifically referenced within and will not be used as documentation of approval for other funding sources.
I agree.

Any problems or noncompliance will be promptly reported to the IRB. For reporting requirements, see Reporting Adverse Events and Unanticipated Problems and Policy on IRB Review of Protocol Deviations and Noncompliance for Non-exempt Research.
I agree.

The research will not take place without the receipt of permission from cooperating institutions, when applicable. I understand that IRB approval of this project does not grant access to any facilities, materials, or data on which this research may depend. Such access must be granted by the unit with the relevant custodial authority.
I agree.

When appropriate for the study, approval will be obtained from other appropriate committees, such as the IACUC (if the research includes animals), the IBC (if the research involves biohazards), the Radiation Safety Committee (if the research involves DXA, x-rays or other radiation producing devices or procedures), etc.; background checks for staff will be obtained when the research involves working with children.
I agree.

I will retain research records for at least three years after the study is complete as required by federal regulations.
I agree.

All activities will be performed in accordance with all applicable federal, state, local, and Iowa State University policies.
I agree.

By entering my password, I am electronically signing this form.

Signed Wednesday, September 11, 2019 3:34:10 PM ET by Gudmunson, Clinton G

Be sure to click "Submit" on the next screen in order for your form to move forward in the submission process.

COI Check - Initial Submission
- Submitted 7/15/2019 4:53:49 PM ET by System, The
Required Signatures

Do you (as a person responsible for the design, conduct, or reporting of the findings of this protocol) have a Significant Financial Interest* that is or could reasonably be perceived by non-experts as related to the research to be conducted under this protocol?

*A Significant Financial Interest includes any of the following for the investigator, his/her spouse or domestic partner, and his/her dependent children:

1. For PHS-sponsored or PHS-flow-through research (e.g. NIH, CDC, FDA), a significant financial interest is payment exceeding \$5,000 in the past 12 months.
2. Payment exceeding \$10,000 in the past 12 months or anticipated in the next 12 months (excluding payments from ISU), including salary, honoraria, fees, or other forms of compensation or anything of value from any entity having a financial interest in this research.
3. An equity interest in any publicly or privately owned entity whose financial interests could be affected by this research, including but not limited to shares of stock or stock options. Do not include equity held in a mutual, pension, or investment fund over which you have no control with regard to investment decisions.
4. An inventorship or ownership interest in any intellectual property not owned by Iowa State University Research Foundation being tested, evaluated, developed in, or its commercial value will be affected by this research.

Additional guidance from the COI Office: [Management Role and/or Significant Financial Interest](#).

Please do one of the following in order to proceed.

- If you have **any** of the Significant Financial Interests listed above, complete the IRB COI Disclosure Form to acknowledge your Significant Financial Interest for this study. Do NOT enter your password below.
- If there is **no** Significant Financial Interest that needs to be disclosed for this study, please continue by signing the form below.

By signing below, I am attesting to not having any of the conflicts listed above and understand that if I do have a Significant Financial Interest related to this study in the future, it is my responsibility to notify the IRB.

Gudmunson, Clinton G (manually added) - signed at 7/15/2019 4:59:41 PM ET
Gammana Liyanage, Maneesha (manually added) - signed at 8/7/2019 1:52:26 PM ET

Department Chair Review and Signature

- Submitted 8/13/2019 1:03:07 PM ET by Weems, Carl Ph.D.

Department Chair Review

As department chair, it is your responsibility to verify the application is complete and that human subjects protections are adequately addressed prior to submission.

Based on your review, is the application complete and ready to send to the IRB for review?

Yes

Department Chair Assurances

By electronically signing this application, I certify that I have reviewed the application in its entirety, and I attest to the following:

The research proposal is scientifically sound, likely to achieve its aim, and the knowledge that is expected to result has importance within the scientific discipline of the researchers.

I agree.

The research team has adequate time and resources, including personnel/staff, IT support, facilities and equipment, etc., necessary to complete the research and ensure human subject protection. The principal investigator and/or supervising investigator has adequate time to supervise the project.

I agree.

The principal investigator and research team are qualified (have the proper training and expertise) to carry out the research.

I agree.

The proposed research is not expected to adversely affect student education, faculty or staff employment, and all research plans are acceptable in terms of departmental and University policies.

I agree.

By entering my password, I am electronically signing this form.

Signed Tuesday, August 13, 2019 1:02:57 PM ET by Weems, Carl Ph.D.

Be sure to click "Submit" on the next screen in order for your form to move forward in the submission process.

Appendix B: Coding Sample

Question	Answer	1 ST Coding	2 nd Coding	Themes
Interviewer: Were you... How was that? Were you sad to leave them, or...	Speaker 2: Yeah. Actually, as I said, my husband was here. I was happy to come here and live with my husband, but a little bit like I was... I didn't realize at that time, "Oh, I'm leaving my family," but when I came here then I missed my family, yeah.	Mixed feelings/ happy to be with husband/ sad to leave family	Mix feelings leaving home	Meaningful opportunities
Interviewer: Like after coming here?	Speaker 2: Yeah.			
Interviewer: Because you were so excited to be here...	Speaker 2: Yeah. yeah. For my-			
Interviewer: Then only after coming, you were sad, kind of. Okay.	Speaker 2: Mm-hm. (affirmative).			
Interviewer: There's that. How was the shifting? I mean, after you left your family and your studies there? Overall, you shifted your almost entire life from [your country] to US. How was that shift of life? It's like shifting gear almost, right? Your country life versus US life. How was that adapting process?	Speaker 2: Yeah. It was like, in terms of education, I completely changed my major what I was studying in [my country].	Changing majors		

Interviewer: Can you, if you feel comfortable, you can share	Speaker 2: I studied business in [my country], but I joined to... I'm in computer science here, so it was... in the beginning, I was excited because I took some computer science courses in [my country], so it was really fun to me, but after completely changing my major, it was really hard, like changing my whole major from one to...	School is hard/ changed majors	Less familiarity	Less familiarity
Interviewer: The other?	Speaker 2: Yeah. In terms of education, it was and it is still challenging for me, and in terms of culture, I just meant... I'm still feeling I'm still not totally adapted.	Need time to adopt	Time	Time
Interviewer: How long have you been in US so far?	Speaker 2: Yeah. It's one and half year.			
Interviewer: One and a half, okay. Very recent.	Speaker 2: Yeah. I'm not too...			
Interviewer: After you moved here, you'd talked a little bit about education difficulty. How about adapting to the life here outside of education [crosstalk]	Speaker 2: Outside of education, I think it wasn't very difficult for me because I'm living with my husband. I can openly talk about anything and I can share everything with my husband. He supports me, so beside education, it's not difficult to me. Yeah.	Husband support/ for daily life (outside of school)	Husband support/ family support	Family support
Interviewer: Then your husband had lived here for longer time-	Speaker 2: Yeah, long times.			
Interviewer:... so he has more	Speaker 2: More experience. Yeah.			

experience about this.				
Interviewer: You want to speak to that?	Speaker 2: Yeah.			
Interviewer: I mean, how was that? He knew about things. How did that help?	Speaker 2: Yeah. Because he's ISU graduate student, and he's here from almost five year, so yeah. I also joined ISU, and he give me every information about ISU. That helps me a lot. He guide and support me in every step of my educational everything. Yeah. Even going through grocery or something, yeah. That helps me a lot.	Some support for education too from husband	Husbands support/family support	Family support
Interviewer: Yeah. How about this other thing, the doing groceries, or these every day life things? How about them. How did you learn, I mean I'm sure help with it.	Speaker 2: Yeah. my husband, help me in everything, like learning, driving, grocery, laundry things, everything. Yeah, from basic homework to other grocery works. My husband helped me.	Husband support in everything	Husband support/ family support	Family support
Interviewer: Okay. Often when families move away from their home countries, they definitely miss family. You said that you do feel it. How do you deal with that one?	Speaker 2: Oh yeah. Actually, because I've been studying here, because of my busy lifestyle, whenever I feel like challenging in education and difficulty in managing the time or something else, then I miss my family in [my country]. I do not have... My life was not this much busy. Yeah. Your question was like, "How you deal with that	Sharing the feeling with husband / openly share	Sharing challenges with husband/ husband support / family support	Family support/

	situation," right? Yeah. I am openly share things my husband, like "I'm missing my home." Then saying he... What to say?			
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Interviewer: How is that?	Speaker 2: Yeah. They are very supportive, and my manager is like... Yeah, they are very cool.	Supportive work environment	Supportive work place / community	Community
Interviewer: Give me an example of how they have been cool.	Speaker 2: Okay. My job is really flexible. When I have exams or whenever I want to take a break, I have to give valid reason, and I can get leave. Yeah. That's really good part of it, and then other things I like, my job is very flexible in terms of time, yeah. That's right. That's good.	Flexible work environment	Flexible work place/ supportive work place / community	Community
Interviewer: Okay. You talked about one of the challenges was because you shifted your majors from what you were studying to IT and you started learning at the same time you started working. Was hard just that IT aspect of it. How are you coping with that? What are you using to overcome that? How you dealing	Speaker 2: Basically, because education... I think I'm just doing my hard work. I'm sticking with my education. I think my hard work is...	Hard working/ helping to cope	Self-motivation/ hard working	Acceptance of reality

with it, basically?				
Interviewer: What's helping you.	Speaker 2: Yeah, yeah. Yeah.			
Interviewer: When you say hard work, what is hard work for you?	Speaker 2: Hard work means like it's sticking with whatever I have decided. I mean...	Dedicated/ personal characteristics	Self-motivation	Acceptance of reality
Interviewer: You can take time.	Speaker 2: Yeah. Yeah.			
Interviewer: Do you do extra research on it, or... For me, for example, me, the journalist is hard. At the beginning it was hard for me. How I learned that was I took time. I didn't... I know some people were really good at it at once, but for me it took time. So like that, for you what is helping...	Speaker 2: Okay.			
Interviewer: You see what I'm trying to ask?	Speaker 2: Yeah. Exactly in my case, people like the classmates here, I think they have good background in computer and they're doing really great job, but because it's really totally different from whatever I studied in [my country]. Yeah. I also take time and practice a never give	Hardworking, never give up, attitude,	Self-motivation	Acceptance of reality

	up attitude, maybe. Try until the last moment.			
Interviewer: Try a lot, right?	Speaker 2: Yeah.			
Interviewer: Okay. Okay. That's good. I think I got what I wanted. When you... In terms of family, you and your husband [inaudible 00:13:01], that is a family.	Speaker 2: Yeah.			

Appendix C: Informed Consent

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Title of Study: **Students in Transnational Families and Sense of Belonging**

Investigators: Maneesha Gammana Liyanage (Principle investigator), Dr. Clinton Gudmunson (Supervising investigator).

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. This form has information to help you to decide whether or not you wish to participate—please review it carefully. Research studies include only people who choose to take part—your participation is voluntary and you can stop at any time.

Please discuss any questions you have about the study or about this form with me before deciding to participate.

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to understand how South Asian student visa-holding families create a sense of belonging as they live in United States (US). Sense of belonging means feel that one's feeling secure, connected and see a potential future. Past research suggests that building a sense of belong is one of the biggest challenges that transnational families face. Understanding the ways in which student visa-holding transnational families create a sense of belonging can be beneficial for organizations and institutes that works closely with these populations to improve the support systems. Additionally, this will be an great opportunity identify where and how non-immigrant visa related laws and policies can be improved to support students visa families development of belonging. Moreover, the findings from this study can help us to learn more about South Asian transnational family systems and functions. Finally, this project will fulfill degree research requirement.

Eligibility to Participate

You may be eligible to participate in this study if you are

- From any of South Asian countries (Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, India, Bhutan, Maldives, Pakistan).
- All the participants and their immediate family should be living in the US. They should hold a type of student visa as well. I define immediate family as the spouse and children.
- The participant should be 18 years or older.
- The participant must had live in US for at least more than a month.
- Participants should be able to directly communicate with me in English.

Description of Study Procedures

If you agree to participate, you will be asked to meet for a one-on-one interview. I will bring questions related to the research topic and ask you to describe your views and describe your experiences. I prefer meetings to be in-person but may also be able to converse with you via computer. We can meet at a location and at a time that is convenient, comfortable, and private. Complete interviews are expected to last about one hour and we may schedule to meet more than once if needed to complete the interview.

For research purposes, I will record our conversation using a mobile recorder, I may take hand-written notes and transcribe our interview.

The interview questions and conversation that we will be having is around your experiences as a visa-holding family in the US. In addition to that, I will ask questions particularly related to “sense of belonging”.

Expected Time or Duration of Participation:

Your participation is expected to last about one hour to one hour and half; this can change depending how much information you wish to share.

Risks or Discomforts

While participating in this study you may experience the following risks or discomforts: These may include, but are not limited to such risks as:

- Emotional discomfort from answering open-ended and personal questions during the interview.
- Concerns about being recorded or later having your words transcribed.
- Also, if the place where the interview happens is in a home or public place there might be a chance of our conversation being overheard during the interview.
- Although there will be no direct questions about risky or dangerous behaviors, that if certain behaviors are disclosed I may be obligated by law to report certain types of information (e.g. child endangerment).

Benefits to You and to Others

This study could benefit society by creating awareness about social and emotional strengths, challenges, and resiliency that exists among visa-holding transnational families regarding sense of belonging. The information could be helpful in the future for providing support to transnational families in the US and elsewhere. The results of this study could inform the design of future studies. You may find some direct benefits in the course of the interview that arises from self-reflection and the process of thinking about and discussing your answers to questions. You may grow in your understanding of the topic. You will not, however, receive any tangible form of compensation for your participation.

Your Rights as a Research Participant

Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in the study or to stop participating at any time, for any reason, without penalty or negative consequences. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer. Your choice of whether or not to participate will not impact your standing as a student or employee. If you wish to withdraw from study during or after the study has begun, we will erase the information that you provided at your request.

If you have any questions *about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury*, please contact the IRB Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

Confidentiality

Research records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available without your permission. However, it is possible that other people and offices responsible for making sure research is done safely and responsibly will see your information. This includes federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy study records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain your private information.

To protect confidentiality of the study records and data, the following measures will be taken. In this study, I will not collect your name, instead I will be signing you a four digit ID number. I will take out your name from the audio recordings and replace them with pseudonym. The information you provide will be kept safe in password-protected computers or locked filing cabinets. At the beginning of the interview I will ask you to take an online survey where you will provide some demographic information such as age, gender, nationality, occupation, etc. This survey will be kept separate from the interview recordings and transcripts. Only authorized personnel will have access to the data you provide.

In cases where you report either abuse/neglect of a minor or dependent adult, or the imminent threat of harm to yourself or others, we may have to break confidentiality by notifying the appropriate authorities to assure the safety of you and others.

Future Use of Your Information

Information collected from the interviews will only summarize the data across all the participants and not include information in any publication or report that could be used to single out as a participant.

Questions

You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information *about the study*, contact Maneesha Gammana Liyanage (maneesha@iastate.edu) or adviser Dr. Clinton Gudmunson (cgudmuns@iastate.edu).

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to participate in this study. Make sure you understand what the study involves before you sign. If you have any questions about the study after you agree to participate, you can contact the research team using the information provided above.

I agree to take part in this study.

Participant's Name (printed) _____

Participant's Signature

Date

By clicking below, you are agreeing to participate in this study. Make sure you understand what the study involves before you agree. If you have questions about the study after you agree to participate, you can contact the research team using the information provided above.

You may print a copy of this form for your files.

☐ *I certify that I am 18 years of age or over and agree to participate in this research study.*

Appendix D: Survey

Sense Belonging Survey

Q1 ID (Please enter the 4 digits ID number given to you. Do not use your name)

Q2 Age

Q3 Country of citizenship

Q4 How many years have you lived in US?

Q5 Which department are you enrolled in (E.g. Engineering, Agriculture, History, etc)

Q6 What is the level program you are currently enrolled in?

☐ Enrolled in undergraduate bachelors program

☐ Enrolled in MS/PHD program

☐ Enrolled in Masters only program

☐ Enrolled in PHD only program

☐ Other

Q7 Currently, who is living with you in the US?

☐ Spouse

☐ Child/ Children

☐ Other

Q8 My spouse is a

☐ Student

☐ Staying home while supporting me

☐ Other

Q9 What does your spouse does?

- ☐ Enrolled in undergraduate bachelors program
- ☐ Enrolled in MS/PHD program
- ☐ Enrolled in Masters only program
- ☐ Other
-

Q10 Age of your spouse

Q11 Ages of your children

- ☐ Child 1
- ☐ Child 2
- ☐ Child 3
-

Q12 What are the different groups of people that you want to belonged to as you live in the US?

- ☐ To my family
- ☐ To my department
- ☐ To work place people
- ☐ To other international student family
- ☐ To friends at home country
- ☐ To friends in host country
- ☐ To my country people
- ☐ People from my religion
-

Q13 When I am with other people, I feel included

- ☐ Strongly disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Strongly agree
-

Q14 I have close bonds with family and friends

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
-

Q15 I feel like an outsider

- ☐ Like a great deal
- ☐ Like a moderate amount
- ☐ Like a little
- ☐ Neither like nor dislike
- ☐ Dislike a little
- ☐ Dislike a moderate amount
- ☐ Dislike a great deal
-

Q16 I feel as if people do not care about me

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
-

Q17 I feel accepted by others

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree
-

Q18 Because I do not belong, I feel distant during the holiday seasons

- ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
-

Q19 I feel isolated from the rest of the world

- ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
-

Q20 I have a sense of belonging

- ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
-

Q21 When I am with other people, I feel like a stranger

- ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
-

Q22 I have a place at the table with others

- ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
-

Q23 I feel connected with others

- ☐ Strongly agree
 - ☐ Agree
 - ☐ Somewhat agree
 - ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
 - ☐ Somewhat disagree
 - ☐ Disagree
 - ☐ Strongly disagree
-

Q24 Friends and family do not involve me in their plans

- ☐ Strongly agree
- ☐ Agree
- ☐ Somewhat agree
- ☐ Neither agree nor disagree
- ☐ Somewhat disagree
- ☐ Disagree
- ☐ Strongly disagree